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YE ARE CHRIST'S

(1 COR. iii. 23).



Eighty-four Considerations for Boys.

BY JOSEPH RICKABY, S.J.

THIRD EDITION
(NEW IMPRESSION.)

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PREFACE.

THESE Considerations are written for boys, not for *rigidi Catones* of severe mien and dreadful aspect. They are not arranged in any order. Each stands by itself. Boys have no love for treatises.

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YE ARE CHRIST'S:

EIGHTY - FOUR CONSIDERATIONS FOR BOYS.



I.—PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

I HAVE to answer for myself to the God who made me. No solicitude of my superiors on my behalf can take that burden off my shoulders. Superiors do their duty in instructing me, in admonishing me, and sometimes in punishing me. If they fail thus to watch over and care for me, God will punish them. But when their duty is done, mine remains to do, and only I can do it. It is as impossible for my superiors to do my duty as for them to take my meals for me. My eating is my own concern, so is my duty. My eating is my own interest, so is my duty. Superiors are concerned about my food to make it good and abundant: but they are concerned rather on my account than on their own. If my food is bad and insufficient, I am the sufferer. And again, if I neglect my duty to God and do evil in the sight of the Most High, I am the sufferer. I shall pay in my own person for all the evil that I do. For my

actions, inasmuch as they are mine, God will call *me* to account, not my superiors. Day by day I run up accounts with my God, who is called a *patient rewarder* (Ecclus. v. 4). On the day of my death all these accounts will be presented to me: I shall have to meet and discharge them all, unless they be somehow cancelled by some subsequent transaction between my Maker and myself. When I am judged, which will be the very instant that I die, I shall be judged alone. God alone will judge me, and I alone shall answer Him. I am apt to forget this, and to fancy that my goodness and virtue is the business of my superiors, as though my enjoyments were my own, but my modesty, my piety, my truthfulness, were theirs. So if I can do wrong on the sly, I fancy I have robbed them, as though I had broken into their garden and stolen their fruit, whereas it is my own fruit that I spoil, and my own garden that I lay waste, whenever I sin, however secretly. It is just in this that I differ from a sheep, or an ox, or any other of the lower animals. When such animals are domesticated, they exist for their masters. Their loss falls on their master. But I do not exist for my masters: it would be more true to say that my masters exist for me. When I am idle, disobedient, sensual, irreligious, the loss falls on myself. My sin is my loss, my salvation my own affair, my damnation my own awful failure, my place in heaven is my own, and no one else's, the reward of my own fidelity to God's grace given me now.

II.—PERSONAL LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

I WANT to love my Saviour with a strong passionate love, such as that with which Mary Magdalen loved Him. Magdalen had been a sinful woman. That circumstance tells me that to love Jesus Christ well and tenderly is not the privilege only of Saints like St. Aloysius: it is my privilege if I choose to use it, full of frailty and imperfection as I feel myself to be. Even of Christians leading good lives, by no means all learn the secret of the personal love of Jesus. If I learn this secret, I shall find it much easier to resist sin and lead a Christian life. I shall resist sin because I would not grieve or displease One whom I love; and, loving Him, I shall wish to be like Him and do as He did. If I learn this secret, I shall not be content merely to resist sin sufficiently to avoid hell. I shall not think it reason enough for doing anything I like, that I do like it and it is no mortal sin; or again, reason for avoiding anything I dislike, that I do dislike it and am not bound to do it under pain of mortal sin. Reckoning in that way is not dealing generously with Jesus Christ. Now love means generosity. Love is high-minded. Love does things handsomely. If I have a strong personal love for my Saviour, I shall be forward to do the handsome thing in His service—thus doing more than my duty but not more than He deserves. How am I to get this personal love of Jesus Christ? By beginning early to love Him. By making Him the friend of my boyhood and of my youth, so that the love of Him may grow in me as I grow, and become part of myself

for all the years that I am to live. By going often to His Blessed Mother, that, like the Wise Men, I may *find the Child with Mary, his mother* (Matt. ii. 11). By loving the image of the Holy Child in His Mother's arms, by being devout to St. Joseph and to everything connected with the Sacred Infancy. By loving the Crucifix, the Stations of the Cross, and the Ecce Homo. But most of all by loving the Blessed Sacrament, where Jesus really is, by making my Communions regularly and with careful preparation. As Mary and Joseph learnt the love of Jesus when Jesus was present to them at Bethlehem and Nazareth, as St. Peter learnt it on the Sea of Galilee, St. John at the Last Supper and by the Cross, so I must learn of Jesus when He comes to me in Holy Communion this one thing necessary, which is to love Him supremely and to trust in Him as my best friend, my Divine Saviour who deigns to love even me.

III.—DISTASTE FOR SIN.

"By a growth of God in the heart, having a distaste for sin." They are the words of Plato¹, and, like many of that philosopher's utterances, they mean more for us Christians than they can ever have meant for him. We cultivate tastes for music, for painting, for architecture. We may also cultivate distastes, as a distaste for lavish expenditure upon our own persons. But best of all is a distaste for sin, such that one may readily say to oneself of anything sinful, 'That is not the sort of thing for me;' 'That is

not in my line.' This distaste, as Plato says, is a gift of God, a second and better nature that God puts into us : it is a gift of grace. It is not equally given to all. Thanks to the prayers of pious parents and the practice of pious ancestors, and a good formation in earliest childhood, this gift takes better root in some characters than in others. But it never flourishes apart from the efforts of him who receives it. It withers by careless keeping, it dies of deadly sin and gross self-indulgence, frequent and unrepented of : it springs to life again in days of repentance, it thrives on hard temptations overcome. By conquering sin in fair fight you come to despise sin and loathe it, as God loathes it, and as it is in itself loathsome and abominable. Of one who has acquired this thorough distaste for sin, St. John says that *he cannot sin* (1 John iii. 9), as one might say of a well-appointed vessel that it cannot founder, not that both vessel and soul might not be lost by wilful mismanagement, but such wilfulness has ceased to be at all likely, and, as St. Gregory Nazianzen explains the text, "to fall away would be more troublesome than the original effort which it took to become good." (Orat. 23.) Understand this of mortal sin, which is always wilful and deliberate, as also of all very wilful and deliberate venial sin, not of those sins of frailty and surprise from which we shall never be quite free in this life. If I crave after wicked things and half wish they were not forbidden, and only avoid them for fear, I am only too likely at times to do them. To be anything like safe from deadly sin, I must get to hate it like poison.

IV.—HERDING AND STRAYING.

“HERDING in childhood may mean straying in youth.” The sense of this quotation is not difficult to master. A flock or herd of boys are kept together at school in the practice of their religion ; but no sooner do they leave school and are left to their own individual efforts than a certain number cease to live as Christians, they forget their Baptism and other Sacraments they have received, and turn out mere children of this world. The conclusion from this melancholy fact is, not that schools should be abolished and every boy provided with a private tutor or left to himself, but that every boy, while he is at school and practising religion in company with his schoolfellows, should make religion his own concern, should put his heart into his prayers, and use his own personal efforts to conquer and overcome sin. It is but too possible to approach the Sacraments mechanically and by routine, merely because others do so, but without any love for Confession and Communion, or any appreciation of one’s need of such helps. It is too possible to go into the chapel when the rest go, night and morning for a week, and all that week not to spend seven minutes really in prayer. I do not say, seven minutes without distractions, but I say, seven minutes of endeavouring to shut out distractions and sincerely seeking after God. This is the sort of “herding” that very soon ends in “straying.” When the world comes to be all around him, and the desires of the flesh grow strong, such a boy surrenders his religion without resistance, as one

parting with a thing he never loved, a thing that never lay next his heart, never touched him, never was his treasure. We have all to pass an examination in the practice of religion, and the world is our examiner. The world in its way is a good examiner, and will test me thoroughly. The business of an examiner is to find out who has imbibed knowledge that he can call his own, and mark him off from others who have laid hold of nothing, but have only been to lectures. So the world soon finds out who prays, who *hears the word of God and keeps it* (St. Luke xi. 28), and who again has been in chapel when prayers and sermons were going on, present there in outward shape but in heart far away. If I am of this second sort, I shall be cast in the examination. The world will discover me and write me down a bad Catholic. And in this particular the verdict of the world will be ratified by the Supreme Judge. There is no going in at the gate of Heaven as one unobserved in a crowd. *Every man according to his works* (Apoc. ii. 23).

V.—PAGANISM AND WORLDLINESS.

They worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. i. 25). This is St. Paul's summary of paganism. But is not paganism antiquated, as extinct as cannibalism, in this Christian kingdom? By no means. Temples of idols, it is true, are no longer seen: but men still worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. How so? By taking the bright, beautiful and pleasant things of this world and having a fling

at them, as though there were no God anywhere nor any world to come; and then, instead of repenting for such conduct, justifying it, holding it up for imitation, and establishing it as a rule of life. Such a procedure is paganism. Even though you undertake to help others to enjoy life as well as yourself, still you remain a pagan, so long as you have no idea of anything better for yourself or your fellow man than to enjoy life and make the most of this world while it lasts. Paganism and worldliness are one and the same thing. The pagan and the worldling both profess to be men of this world, to live for this world, and to enjoy life. The life of the world to come is no concern of theirs. They do not like to think of it; and when the thought occurs, they dismiss the subject with a vague hope in the goodness of a God whom they make no effort to serve. "Beware of worldliness," says St. Ambrose, *cave saeculum*. There is no better advice. Sin you may perhaps repent of, but once gone thoroughly worldly there is every danger of your losing your soul. You will lose it, unless God chastise you with His rod, and beat the worldliness out of you by severe suffering. Then perhaps you may return to the God who once gave joy to your youth. When you can enjoy the world no longer, you may return to Him. Perhaps you may then return, and perhaps not. Do not risk it, do not risk your soul. Never let worldliness absorb you, never become a pagan.

VI.—THE CORRUPTION OF HUMAN NATURE.

"A SCHOOL shows as undisguisedly as any place the corruption of human nature." (Arnold, Letter dated Rugby, February 26, 1834.) The corruption of human nature means the evil that comes of taking things easily, the readiness with which we fall into sin, when we do not make a continual effort to keep straight and do not practise much prayer. Nature is like a fruit that easily spoils by being badly kept. A corrupt nature is an ill-kept, neglected nature, which has gone bad from being let alone. Nature is good, to begin with, as God made it. Still more is nature good when it is regenerate in Christ by baptism. But not even in the baptized can nature be trusted to keep good. It needs continual watching, in early years the watchful care of parents and other superiors, and also the care of the young person himself watching himself. The proper end and aim of watching over boys is not merely to keep them out of mischief for the present, but also for the future to engender in them a habit of watching over themselves, when all other human guardianship is withdrawn. I must learn to watch over my own heart in that inner kingdom of self where no other but God's eye and my own conscience beholds what I think and do. When boys fail thus to watch over themselves in secret, the corruption of human nature soon appears in them, even externally and visibly. Sin is first in the heart, then it is on the lips. Foul thoughts inspire foul words, and from foul words to filthy conduct is an easy transition.

We watch over a person to prevent his doing quite

as he likes, and also to prevent others doing to him quite as they like. One way or another, watchfulness is preventive of impulse. We watch over ourselves to prevent ourselves from gratifying every impulse as it arises, especially those impulses which no one can prevent our gratifying if we will—inward impulses of rage, of envy, of insubordination, of impurity. To watch is to stand in readiness to say *No* to ourselves. The boy who always says *Yes* to himself, and allows himself everything which he thinks can afford him gratification, is sucked into sin like the small fry into the mouth of the whale, as the monster rushes through the water open-mouthed, taking for its food all that comes. Sin has only to come near, and that pleasure-seeking boy is its victim. Let temptation approach, and at once he falls. He does not watch, nor does he do that without which even his watching would be all in vain: for *unless the Lord keep the city, in vain he watcheth that keepeth it* (Ps. 126): he does not pray frequently, earnestly, and from his heart.

VII.—TOO MUCH PIETY (I.).

THE complaint is heard that there is too much piety in Catholic Colleges. This is at once a question of fact and a question of possibility. Is there too much piety? Can there be too much piety? Leaving the former question unanswered, we may find in the latter an excellent subject for consideration. Is it possible to have too much piety? Let us ask our Blessed Lord in the gospel, and answer the question, so far as we can, according to His Divine words. Our Lord there tells us

of several things that we may easily have too much of, but He does not put piety among them. He tells us of one thing that we cannot possibly have too much of—nay, that we are bidden to have as much of as we can get; and this, if it be not piety, is something very like piety, the love of God. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength: this is the first commandment* (St. Mark xii. 30). Our Lord never said, ‘Get all the money you can,’ or ‘get all the reputation you can,’ or ‘get all the pleasure you can’; but He did say, ‘get all the love of God you can.’ Learning is an excellent thing: but search the four gospels through, and little will you find from our Lord’s lips in praise of learning. Jesus Christ had something better at heart than learning. He, the Eternal Wisdom, saw the infirmity and shortcomings of the highest human science. He did not recommend science, but faith. On the other hand, He never said anything to discourage learning. But he said much to discourage men from the pursuit of riches and reputation and pleasure. *Woe to you that are rich: woe to you when all men shall speak well of you* (St. Luke vi. 24, 26). *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor* (St. Matt. xix. 21). *Look to yourselves, that your hearts be not made heavy in surfeiting and drunkenness* (St. Luke xxi. 34). Piety is not exactly the love of God, but it is at once a means of acquiring that love, and an effect of that love when acquired. Piety means the practice of religious exercises, prayer, hearing Mass, frequentation of the

Sacraments, Benediction, devotions like the Rosary and the Way of the Cross. Piety stands to the love of God much as study does to learning. Men become learned by study, and when learned they love to study more. So true piety leads to the love of God, and men who love God very much are very pious. A great end is not attained otherwise than by a lavish use of means; and when attained, it is productive of great results. Do we want a great love of God, or are we going to be contented with a half-hearted love of Him, contrary to *the first commandment*, that we should love Him *with our whole heart*? We cannot love God much unless we are very pious. We have not settled the question yet whether it is possible or not possible to put too much piety upon a boy: that enquiry remains open. But this at least appears from our Lord's words, that there are many other matters in which we should dread excess more anxiously than we dread excess of piety.

VIII.—TOO MUCH PIETY (II.).

It may occur to some of us that there was one class of people whom our Lord in His mortal life thoroughly disliked, and these were men of too much piety. I mean the Pharisees. *Ye hypocrites*, He said to them, *well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: this people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; and in vain do they worship me* (St. Matt. xv. 7, 9). And again, *Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who pay tithe of small things, and have let alone the weightier things of the law. These things you ought to have done*

and not to leave those others undone (St. Matt. xxiii. 23). But does not this text show that it was not the pious practices of the Pharisees that our Lord condemned, but their deficiencies on more important points, their ostentation (St. Matt. vi. 2, 16 ; xxiii. 5), their secret impurities (St. Matt. xxiii. 27), and, above all, their refusal to see and believe in the true Christ (ib. 13)? A person is not necessarily pleasing to God because he is a frequent communicant and is often seen in church. He may be a hypocrite, living in sin all the while, and knowing it, but concealing it and unwilling to give it up, while to please men he multiplies his practices of religion. This is false piety of the sort of which our Lord says, *Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven* (St. Matt. vii. 21). This person has not got too much piety: he has a false piety, which is no piety at all. You do not call a purse too full of money—nay, it is really empty of money—when it is stuffed with forged notes and a dozen bad half-crowns. Such was the piety of the Pharisees, like false money. The less of that any one has, the better. But there is really no danger of this false piety for the generality of boys or men of the present day. The hypocrite copies what he sees to be the fashion of the season. Thus the Pharisees found the strict observance of the Mosaic law in fashion, and they copied accordingly. A sanctimonious outward mien was in fashion in England for a century after the Reformation, and many hypocrites took it up. There were hypocrites in Rome and in Constantinople and Paris, when the Catholic Church was dominant there. One benefit of a little

persecution is that it makes hypocrites fall off openly from the Church, as the October wind shakes the withered leaves from the trees. In our day, piety is not held in honour: a man who will be openly pious must reckon on being counted in the number of *fools for Christ's sake* (1 Cor. iv. 10), and that the hypocrite will never make up his mind to be. He has no love for Christ's cross.

It must be allowed that religious observances may be multiplied over much, not indeed when we consider the majesty of God, but considering the weakness and limitation of man. A life wholly devoted to prayer, like that of the Carthusians or Poor Clares, is a life eminently worth living. God expects it of certain souls, to whom He gives that vocation. But most men and boys are drawn into the whirlpool of life, into occupations inconsistent with long prayers, and there is a limit besides to one's capacity for prayer as to all other capacities. The limit varies for different persons. Where religious exercises are performed in common, an average must be struck, and a measure prescribed by the discretion of Superiors. There are extremes either way, too many religious practices and too few. But the extreme of *too few* is the more dangerous. How many men and boys would be better for less self-indulgence and more prayer!

IX.—TOO MUCH PIETY (III.).

It would be a strange charge to bring against a school: 'These boys have too much to eat, too long hours of sleep, too much of gymnastics and running and

drill and games generally, also too much of lessons: they ought to eat less, play less, be less in the open air: they should leave literature and art alone, and do something useful to earn their own livelihood.' This would be a strange accusation: it would be tantamount to blaming the school for being a school at all; for all these things are of the essence of school life. Nor is it an argument against the use of them, that they will be dropped altogether or used more sparingly in after life. Schooling means the formation of habits, as also the building up of bodily and mental strength for habits to go upon. Schooling means the having the rough work of life put off for a time, till habits are formed enabling one to do such work more efficiently. Now a habit is only got by exercise, that is to say, by doing the thing very often, much oftener indeed than you need to do it afterwards. When one is learning to swim, he should go into the water daily, if possible. When one can swim well, he may exercise his habit and skill once a quarter, and be in no danger of losing it. Now there is a habit of religion and piety to be acquired in boyhood—a habit, that is to say, of fearing and loving God above all things, of resisting temptations, and, as a means thereto, of praying readily: for unless we are ready with our prayers, we are sure to sin in grave temptation. Like other habits, this habit of religion and piety is got only by frequent exercise: we are not born with it. Therefore a boy must pray often, oftener perhaps than he will pray as a man, till the habit of prayer is formed in him. He must receive the Sacraments often, to build up the habit of the love of God, that charity and sanctifying

grace may grow in him with the growth of his youth. This is part of his education, surely not the least important part. Facilities are afforded at school for growth of mind and muscle, often greater facilities than can be afforded afterwards. In a Catholic school, facilities are afforded also for the growth of piety, by daily Mass, fortnightly or monthly Communion, morning and evening prayers, and other devotions. I should avail myself of these aids to grow up a robust Christian. It is no argument against my frequenting the Sacraments at school, to say that when I have left school I shall not approach them so frequently. No one would consent to starve this year in expectation of a famine the next. I need the Sacraments more frequently till my character is formed. I should prepare in these fat years of plenty for lean years to come.

X.—UNHEALTHY THINKING.

"THERE'S nothing good or bad but thinking makes it," according to the Shakespearian saying. As doctors cultivate microbes, *cocci* and *bacilli* and other germs of disease, in preparations of gelatine, so I may cultivate discontent in the bitterness of my own thoughts, brooding over my wrongs and the advantages that others have against me. So a man may cultivate unbelief, by dwelling on those things in creation which we can least understand, to the neglect of what we can understand and should be thankful for. Men generally believe and behave according to the company that they keep, the books that they read, the thoughts that they

indulge. Now those thoughts and conversations and readings are unhealthy, which render a Catholic boy discontented with the Providence that at present is about him, or a Catholic man mistrustful of the word of God conveyed to him by the Catholic Church. When one has found God, and possesses Him, a sure mark of the approach of evil is the troubling and unsettling of the mind. No food is poisonous to an angel, because he is above food: many things are poison to mortal man. No argument, no information, no suggestion, could tell with evil effect upon a perfect mind; but then our minds are not perfect, they are frail and corruptible as our bodies are. Both for body and soul we have to take the precautions which people take who, if not actually ill, may easily become so. It will not do for us to eat every eatable-looking thing that we cast eyes on, nor to read any and every book or periodical we find on a bookstall or in a library, nor to lend our ears to every discussion, or our heart to every alluring desire. To do so may be called 'freedom' and 'free thought': it is an unhealthy and even deadly absence of due self-restraint. "O, that way madness lies, let me shun that, no more of that, I would not be mad, not mad, sweet Heaven," says King Lear. And let me too shun company and conversations, readings and trains of thought, that are apt to bring on the spiritual frenzy of sin.

XI.—ADVANTAGES OVER OTHERS.

“WHATEVER excellence a man has, is given to him by God, to use for the service of his fellow-men : hence the testimony that other men render to his excellence ought so far forth to be a matter of complacency to him, as it shows the way open to him to make himself of service to others.” So writes St. Thomas Aquinas, treating of Ambition. His meaning may be illustrated by a story of a number of horses in a field where a pump was : a man used to come occasionally and pump to give them a drink : one of the horses was clever enough to imitate him, and learnt to work the handle for itself : the other horses could not do that, but when they wanted a drink, and no man came, they used to go and bite this clever horse until it pumped for them. Now this clever horse represents the rich man, the man of talent, the man in any way strong and capable above his fellows, and the strong and capable boy among his schoolmates. Without waiting to be bitten, or even spoken to, he should put his strength into the public service, so that all around him should be the better for his being more powerful than they. The evil tendency of human nature is to use one’s superiority to quite another effect, to the gratification of one’s own passions and selfish desires, trampling others down and tyrannising over others, and harming others in soul and body for one’s own amusement. The disposition to this was called by the Greeks *ὑβρις*, a word hard to translate. Our word *uppishness* is nearly allied to it, but falls far short of it in meaning. *Tyrannical temper* is a nearer rendering : for the Greeks said, “*ὑβρις*

makes the tyrant," ὑβρις φύει τύραννον. The tyrant, or "tyrannical man," as Plato describes him, is the direct opposite of the Christian, of the disciple of Him who came, meek and humble of heart, not to be ministered unto but to minister (Matt. xi. 29; xx. 28). The tyrannical boy, I must understand, is the boy who misuses his advantages over other boys for selfish purposes, making others bow and defer to him for the pleasure of feeling his superiority over them, with no idea of turning his advantages to the common good, and I may add, with no remembrance of the truth that his gifts of special agility in games, of a fine voice, a quick understanding, or high birth, or abundance of money, are all so many talents lodged with him by God for the benefit of his fellow-men, for the use whereof he is responsible to the God who gave them. Who will bring us to understand that advantages of person or of fortune are responsibilities, things to use with fear, not fuel for vanity and instruments of self-indulgence? For so the Old Testament warns us: *The mighty shall be mightily tormented* (Wisdom. vi. 6), if they turn not their ability to the profit of those about them; and our Lord repeats the warning in the New: *To whomsoever much is given, much shall be required of him* (Luke xii. 48).

XII.—CONFESSIO FUCATA.

Fucus is the Latin for paint, especially for the paint wherewith people paint their faces, in order to appear more beautiful than they really are, or less ugly. *Fucus* thus comes to mean *pretence*. A *confessio fucata* is the

name that theologians give to a *painted* or *pretended* confession, a confession which is no real confession at all, in which no valid absolution is given—in other words, a bad confession. A bad confession is an insincere confession, a confession in which, to use a phrase that we apply to transactions of this world, the penitent does not ‘mean business’: has no mind to take the obvious means for getting his sins forgiven. On the other hand, every time I go to confession, and heartily want to do the thing well, I make a good confession. It may be a blundering confession: in ignorance or forgetfulness or confusion of mind I may have left something out that I ought to have told, as I may blunder in saying my lessons through the same causes. Next time I go to confession, if I have discovered my mistake in the interval, I rectify the blunder, and say what I ought to have said before, but by mistake omitted. But that mistake did not make my previous confession a bad one: only wilful concealment of mortal sin, or total neglect of the act of contrition, or the absence of any serious intention of avoiding grievous sin in future—only these defects can make a bad confession. Therefore I may take it as a rule, that people who are making bad confessions know it; they know that they are mocking God, and have no mind to do the thing properly. And, as St. Paul says, *God is not to be mocked* (Gal. vi. 7). There is no straighter road to hell than bad confessions. They are nails in a man’s coffin consigning him to eternal death. When boys who have been well brought up in a Catholic school, fall away from the practice and profession of faith as soon as the liberty of manhood

becomes theirs, the question occurs,—a question to be answered only at the Last Day,—whether, when they were boys, they were not systematically making bad confessions and consequently bad Communions too. A bad confession is a wilful, deliberate, and inexcusable sin, a plain sin that stares you in the face, and cries out with the voice of your conscience against you. And it is so easy to make a good confession! Everybody makes good confessions who is anxious to do so, which is more than can be said of success in other examinations. What God looks for is a penitent who is definitely resolved and has made up his mind in good earnest to give up sin, to do the evil thing no more, to resist temptation when it comes upon him, to leave wicked books unread, to start no immodest conversation and do nothing to keep it up when others start it; above all, to pray when tempted, to call on the Blessed Virgin, to think of the Passion and of one's last Communion, to hear Mass, praying against sin; in short, to use the means of grace ready to hand, without which our human nature can never resist that *down-dragging tendency to sin, which so easily besets us* (Heb. xii. 1).

XIII.—TRUTHFULNESS.

THE devil from the beginning abode not in truth, for he is a liar and the father of lies, says our Lord (John viii. 44). Our Lord could not endure the Pharisees, because they were *hypocrites* (Matt. xxiii.); and describing the state of a lost soul, He says such a one has his *portion with hypocrites* (Matt. xxiv. 51). Himself He was the most

outspoken and truthful of men. *I have spoken openly to the world*, He said to the high priest; and to Pilate, *For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth* (John xviii. 20, 37), which St. Paul calls a *good confession before Pontius Pilate* (1 Tim. vi. 13). His very enemies addressed Him as though this were the most noted feature in His character: *Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth; neither carest thou for any man, for thou dost not regard the person of men* (Matt. xxii. 16). Antichrist's character, we may suppose, will be modelled on that of Satan, and will be in all things the reverse of that of our Blessed Lord. Then we may take it for a sure mark of Antichrist that he will be a hypocrite, a systematic deceiver, one who continually plays a part, pretending to be that which he is not; a man clothed in false virtues like a wearer of false jewelry; a man who with loud cries will impute to others vices which are really his own; in short and plain English, not an honest man. A Christian boy will be as unlike as possible to Antichrist and Satan, and will be a copy, a poor and humble copy, yet something of a likeness, of his Divine Saviour. He will then be honest and outspoken and truthful, a hater of falsehood and hypocrisy and cheating and underhand dealing. He will think as he says; and although he may not say all that he thinks, nor tell everybody all that he knows, for that might be imprudent, or uncharitable, or even unjust, yet what he does say will be the utterance of his real mind: he will not go about sowing falsehoods to serve a purpose. The simple and direct method,

wherever it can be taken, will always be the method of his choice. Some one who was asked how he came to be such a success in diplomacy, replied, "Because I always tell the truth." A boy of the right sort will not be ashamed to avow that he is ignorant or unskilful, that he has been in the wrong, that such and such a failure was his fault, that he is poor, cannot afford expensive clothes or expensive food: the things he will most readily dissemble, be silent about, or leave to others to tell of, are his capabilities and successes. Here is the connexion between honest truthfulness and humility: hence also we see why pride and lying go together, and why Satan, the rebel angel, the proudest of proud creatures, is the father of lies. Also, why our Saviour, *meek and humble of heart, has loved justice, or fair dealing, and hated iniquity, that is, all foul play* (Matt. xi. 29; Heb. i. 9). It is the fruit of a good education to have a facility in clothing one's thought in words, to be always able and generally willing to speak one's mind. Yet there is *a time to be silent* as well as *a time to speak*. A Christian boy, and a Christian man, will often be silent for modesty or conscience sake. But he will not easily be silent for fear.

XIV.—OUR GUEST IN HOLY COMMUNION.

To invite a guest to your house and there insult him, no honourable man can think of such a proceeding without horror. No gentleman will behave otherwise than with civility to the person with whom he sits at table, however much he may dislike him. Merely to abstain from

insult, however, is poor hospitality. To receive a guest with coldness and disregard his wants, is a thing we should be ashamed of. "Never shall it be said of my house that guests are badly received there."¹ We go to our guest's apartment, and ask him, 'Have you everything you want?'; and we are not content with his answering that he has: we look with our own eyes and see that he has every convenience we can think of and afford. When we receive Holy Communion, Jesus Christ, the Master of Heaven, our dear Saviour, comes as our guest. To receive Him when we are consciously under the guilt of mortal sin, would be to mock Him and insult Him, as did Judas when, with traitorous purpose *coming to Jesus, he said, Hail Rabbi, and he kissed him* (Matt. xxvi. 49). May earth yawn wide and be my grave, ere ever I do that. I must be free from mortal sin whenever I go to Communion: must I be also free from all venial sin? Instead of answering *yes* to this question, it would be more correct to say that I should try to free myself from all affection to venial sin, so that nothing which I know to be even slightly displeasing to my Saviour should I cling to and not intend to amend. Thus, if I have a very sharp temper, and am always contradicting others, provoking them and getting myself angry, and this occurs to me when I am preparing for Holy Communion, perhaps because since my confession I have broken out in that way,—well, I should not on that account stay away from Communion, but I should resolve to do a little better, and, as

¹ Words of Father Alfred Weld, S.J., Master of Novices, 1860—1864, a typical English gentleman as well as a holy priest.

a means thereto, to abstain in conversation from topics which irritate. When I meet my Divine Guest and ask Him, 'Lord, have you everything you want?' He will perhaps let me know that He wants more meekness and control of temper; that I am wasting my time at school, and He expects to see me more diligent at my books; that I am doing another boy harm by the advances I am making him: or, speaking through my conscience, He will tell me that in some gratification which I allow myself, some book I am reading, or some company I frequent, though I have not yet fallen into mortal sin, yet I am getting dangerously near. Then be it mine to reply, 'Lord, I am grateful for your telling me: you shall have what you ask for.' This is the way not merely to escape the guilt of sacrilege, but to give my Lord good hospitality, when He comes to be my guest in the Sacrament of His love.

XV.—VOCATION.

THE members of the Church have each and all a work to do for God, but not every member of the Church has a *vocation*. A vocation is a call to a *state of perfection*. A *state* is a permanent position by which one stands on a different footing from one's fellows in regard of liberty and right: the word is a term of the Roman lawyers. *Perfection* is the love of God, and is not necessarily annexed to any *state*. The collier who loves God better is more perfect than the monk who loves Him less. But one *state* is more perfect than another *state*, inasmuch as it carries with it more engagements and more

practices, that either help to the love of God (as does the obligation of reciting the Divine Office), or remove obstacles to that love (as does the vow of poverty). A vocation is never obligatory under pain of sin to take up and accept; it is the voice of God, not commanding but counselling: *he that can take, let him take*, says our Lord in the nineteenth of St. Matthew, which chapter is the authority in the gospels for the doctrine of vocation. All who enter on a state of perfection, enter uncommanded and unconstrained. The special militia of the Church, consisting of the priesthood and the regular Orders, is a volunteer army: there is no conscription; but volunteers have never failed, and never will: the love of Christ Crucified and of the Eucharistic Jesus is a motive upon the hearts of some of the youth of every generation. In this the New Law differs from the Old: the Levites in the Old Law, by the mere fact of their being born of the tribe of Levi, were obliged to dedicate themselves to the service of the altar (Exod. ii. 1; iv. 14; Num. iii. 5—12): in the New Law it is not a question of birth, but of personal choice. A vocation is well described by St. Ignatius: "All who have judgment and reason will offer themselves entirely to labour: but they who shall wish to show greater loyalty, and to signalise themselves in the perfect service of their Eternal King and Universal Lord, will not only offer themselves entirely to labour, . . . but will make offerings of greater value and greater moment."¹ A vocation then is a *special call* from God

¹ Strictly, St. Ignatius here is not describing a vocation, but the readiness to accept a vocation, if given.

to a state of higher perfection than that of ordinary Christians. This *special call*, wherever it takes effect, involves two things: a *wish* to follow the call, and *fitness* to follow it. The *call* is heard in the inward sanctuary of the heart. The *wish* is not a desire of *flesh and blood*, but a grace from our *Father who is in heaven*, often quite against the natural liking (Matt. xvi. 17, 23, 24). At the first breathings of a vocation, the young soul of the recipient is *troubled at the speech*, as was Mary at the voice of the angel: then it is bidden *not to fear*, for it has *found grace with God*; and that child is *blessed* among all its playmates (Luke i. 28, 29, 30). Of *fitness* the person called is not the judge, but ecclesiastical and religious superiors, to whom he submits himself for probation and trial. It is a piece of Protestantism to scoff at vocations: we should at least praise God's gift, though not offered to ourselves. It is the glory of a large and happy Catholic family to produce a vocation. A sound Catholic is glad to have brother or sister, uncle or aunt or cousin, or child, who has *pleased God*, and is *found no more* in the ordinary walks of life, *because the Lord hath taken and translated him* to something higher and better (Gen. v. 24).

XVI.—VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

Nor does any one take this honour to himself but he who is called by God, as was Aaron (Heb. v. 4). The text refers to the Jewish high priest, but it holds with greater force of the more excellent priesthood of the New Law even in its humblest recipient. There was an

age when too many took this honour to themselves, uncalled by God, but greedy of wealthy benefices or livings. That age in England ceased with the Reformation, and is not likely ever to be restored. A priest ordained to the English mission knows that he is ordained to a sphere of hard work and small remuneration, indeed that he may not improbably have to go round and beg for his own support and the maintenance of his church. He need not be surprised, if he finds his whole life, or parts of it, a life of privation and humiliation and contradiction and temptation and danger both to body and soul. He has one consolation and one safeguard, his daily Mass. So long as he says Mass with reverence and a clear conscience, with adequate preparation beforehand and due thanksgiving after, he may confidently expect to surmount all difficulties and do a brave work for God. He is more in contact with souls than religious men are, as a rule. He has less of safety than the religious, but greater freedom of action. A strong, independent character, with marked personal peculiarities, will often do better in the secular priesthood than in religious life. A *Curé d'Ars* would be an impossibility in the cloister. A thing to remember is that a boy may have a vocation to the priesthood, who has no vocation to any religious Order. If I cannot be a Capuchin or a Premonstratensian, it does not follow that I ought not to be a priest. We talk of the conversion of England: well, there is one means to convert England, an ample supply of highly-trained, single-minded, saintly parochial clergy.

XVII.—VOCATION TO RELIGIOUS LIFE.

“THOUGH all in general who worship God may be called *religious*,” says St. Thomas, “the name is specially given to such as dedicate their entire lives to the worship of God; as the name of *contemplatives* is bestowed, not simply on persons who contemplate, but on such as devote their whole lives to contemplation.” A religious is one who devotes his whole life to God under a rule approved by the Church. Such a rule always includes the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and beyond that, each several Order has its own prescribed way of life. This is the first benefit of a religious vocation, that one knows what to do with oneself, and has a regular method of living for God. “I do not wonder,” said Dr. Johnson in the year 1761, “that where the monastic life is permitted, every Order finds votaries and every monastery inhabitants. Men will submit to any rule by which they may be exempted from the tyranny of caprice and of chance.” Caprice and chance, it may be added, are the undoing of all efforts after piety. A second advantage is that, like Alpine climbers, religious men are roped together, so that every man is held up by the support of the rest; and they have guides. In a religious house one is not lonely, not without counsel and direction. Nothing shows better how dear the religious are to the heart of God than this, that to them above other men has gone down the legacy which Christ bequeathed to His disciples: *Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake* (Matt. x. 22). Whenever tyrants begin to persecute the

Church of God, they strike first at the religious Orders : them they fear and detest beyond the rest. What Satan so abominates, our Divine Saviour correspondingly loves. When Jesus *looks upon* a young man *and loves him*, we cannot be surprised if He calls him to the religious life (Mark x. 21), or to the priesthood (Matt. iv. 19), or to both together. *But every one hath his proper gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that. . . . But as the Lord hath distributed to every one, as God hath called every one, so let him walk* (1 Cor. vii. 7, 17).

XVIII.—SANCTIFYING GRACE.

SANCTIFYING grace, otherwise called the state of grace, is a certain state in which I was put by baptism,—in which, doing good works, I merit heaven,—which grows upon me by every such good work done, and by every Sacrament worthily received,—a state from which I fall by mortal sin, and which I recover by repentance,—a state, dying in which I am sure to go to heaven, and dying out of which I am sure to be lost eternally. Sanctifying grace then is a very important thing : it is in fact the most important thing in life to a Christian. His lifelong occupation should be to guard and increase this treasure. To guard it, as his Saviour bids him : *Watch ye, because ye know not the day nor the hour : take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is when the lord of the house cometh, lest coming on a sudden he find you sleeping ; and what I say to you I say to all, Watch* (Matt. xxv. 13 ; Mark xiii. 33—37). To

increase it, by good works and Sacraments, as his Saviour again bids him : *Traffic till I come* (Luke xix. 13). Our Lord speaks of *watching* as servants sit up for their master, not knowing at what hour of the night, early or late, he may be coming back : neither do I know when our Lord will come again to judge the earth, or, what is more important for me personally, when I shall die and appear before His judgment seat, whether now in the spring-time of my years or after a long life. However long be my life, there is not a day of it on which I may not die unexpectedly. And to die out of the state of grace means for me to go down into the hell of fire. Therefore my Saviour's warning, *I say to you, watch*, means, as it is addressed to me, *Live in the state of grace*. But I cannot live in the state of grace without growing in it, and increasing the store of sanctifying grace already in me. I must do good works, and every good work in the state of grace merits an increase of sanctifying grace, and consequently an increase of glory in heaven. Now everything I do from morning to night may be and ought to be a good work. Whatever I do, ought to be a right and proper thing for me to be doing at the time, be it saying my morning prayers or kicking football. If it is a right and proper thing to do, it is a good work. Especially if it means a temptation conquered ; for instance, a temptation to idleness at study-time, or to selfishness at meals ; it is an eminent good work. Then I have to receive the Sacraments at times. When I get a valid absolution, when I receive Holy Communion worthily, I get new store of sanctifying grace from the Sacrament, not as a thing merited, but as a bounty and a gift. Thus, one

way or another, I am to imitate my Saviour, of whom it is written that as He *grew in age*, or stature, He likewise grew in *grace before God*. Thus too I am to grow in the likeness of my Immaculate Mother, *full of grace* (Luke i. 28 ; ii. 40, 52 ; John i. 14).

XIX.—SANCTIFYING GRACE OUR COMFORT IN THE ILLS OF LIFE.

TRoubles come in abundance from without, but not the least of man's troubles is his own unsatisfactory self: as in navigating a rough sea in some crazy craft, the waves are heavy, but your chief annoyance is that they reveal so many weak points in your vessel. It might have been constructed to behave so very much better! Few people perhaps are dissatisfied with their own judgment: but who is satisfied with his own constancy, his own self-control? What room for self-satisfaction is left when one reflects on the scrutinising gaze of God? What a poor appearance I must present to the eyes of my Maker? Our good resolutions fail, our fits of piety pass off, faults that we thought overcome re-assert themselves, our weaknesses are apparent on every possible occasion: we say to ourselves in the bitterness of disappointment, 'Oh that I were better': 'Can I ever be good?'. We cry with St. Bernard: "There is nothing seated in me, but all is in commotion, all things sway to and fro, my whole being tosses like the sea." Yes, there is one thing that with a little fidelity and care will remain constant within me; and that is the best thing of all, the sanctifying grace of God. Sanctifying

grace is never absent from us except when we are in mortal sin. More than that, whenever it is in the soul at all, it is there in all the fulness that it has ever attained to in that soul. Grace does not lend itself to figures, but we may use figures to aid our understanding of this matter. As a man, once grown to six feet, will never again be reduced to a stature of four feet or five, but wherever he is at all, there is six feet of him ; so the sanctifying grace that in a particular soul could once be represented by 60, can never be represented in that soul by a lower number, say 48. It may drop down to zero, and be all lost, but if it comes back again, it comes back in a quantity at least up to 60. Sanctifying grace is not diminished by venial sin. Venial sins of great perversity and wilfulness endanger sanctifying grace, inasmuch as they lead on to mortal sin : but though they endanger it, they do not diminish it. While there is any of it at all in the soul, there is all that ever was there : and if, after being lost, it comes back again, there comes back all that ever was there. The frailty of the *earthen vessel* in which it is contained, does not make the *treasure* less (2 Cor. iv. 7). There are very strange people in the state of grace,—here “a lazy, ragged, filthy, story-telling beggar-woman,” as Cardinal Newman says (*Apologia* p. 248), there a lot of idle boys, mischievous and giddy. If they were to die as they are now, they would be punished in purgatory for their idleness, but in the end they would go to heaven for sure,—they have a right to go there. Even now, with all their faults, they are God’s most dear children, His right trusty and well-beloved sons. All this is meant, not to encourage me in my faults, but

to save me from the discouragement that comes of my efforts at improvement seeming to lead to so little. It is not a little thing if, with all my imperfections on my head, still I am in the state of grace.

XX.—THE RAMPARTS OF SANCTIFYING GRACE.

If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, says St. Paul (1 Cor. xiii.), and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Throughout this chapter the Apostle speaks of the *charity of God* which is *poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us* (Rom. v. 5). That is, he speaks of the theological virtue of charity, which is either identical with, or inseparably attached to, the gift of sanctifying grace. If a man have not charity, that is, if he be out of the state of grace, no work that he does is meritorious of heaven. A *sounding brass* trumpet, or a *tinkling cymbal*, may be of occasional use to others, but it is a poor thing of itself: such is the man out of grace and without charity, whatever brilliant speech be his or glorious action. The Apostle goes on to tell us that *charity is patient, is kind, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things* (vv. 4-7). Now a person may be impatient, unkind, selfish, suspicious, revengeful, and yet be in the state of grace all the time and so have charity. He may undoubtedly, so long as he does not go beyond venial sins. How then are the Apostle's words true? In this way: much as if he had said, 'money goes well-dressed,' and

then you had pointed out a man clad in rags, who yet bore upon his breast a purse of his own, well lined with gold and bank notes. The explanation would have been that the man was a miser and was acting unnaturally, the use of money being to spend, and one of the first things that men usually spend their money on being the decent clothing of their own persons. Even so does a person in the state of grace act unnaturally, and do violence to the gift of God within him, when, without effort to restrain himself, he loses his temper upon every provocation, pays small regard to other's feelings, brags and boasts of himself, and becomes a small plague upon society. St. Paul says of such a one, that he *grieves the Holy Spirit of God in whom he was sealed unto the day of redemption* (Eph. iv. 30) that is to say, though he does not drive away, yet he displeases the Holy Ghost who was given him in Baptism. Such is the effect of venial sin, when it is wilful and unchecked, and recklessly multiplied. Such venial sin leads on to mortal sin, whereby sanctifying grace is lost and the Holy Ghost driven from the heart. It is not then enough to be in the state of grace : we must behave as becomes that state, and not of set purpose behave unbecomingly even in little things : otherwise, going from little faults to greater, we shall finally lose sanctifying grace altogether. This then is the use, this indeed the necessity of acquiring virtues. Acquired virtues are good habits ; and good habits, like skill in games, are got by repeated good acts : by doing a thing well over and over again, we get into the way of doing the thing readily whenever we see occasion for it. Such good habits are the virtues of

obedience, of self-control, of temperance, of meekness, of modesty, of diligence. These virtues themselves are not sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace may exist without them, as in the baptized infant or in the newly absolved sinner. The infant has no acquired habits whatever: the inveterate sinner, who has just made a good confession, has no acquired good habits, but many bad ones: yet both have sanctifying grace. But that grace is not safe, unless the possessor of it is diligent in doing good, resisting evil, and so acquiring habits of virtue. These acquired habits of virtue are the ramparts and defences of sanctifying grace. A man is a fool, who having a great treasure in his possession leaves it unsecured.

XXI.—THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God? (1 Cor. vi. 19.) Elsewhere we read: *And the Lord appeared to Solomon, and the Lord said to him: I have sanctified this house that thou hast built, and my eyes and my heart shall be there all days (3 Kings ix. 2, 3).* And further: *And the house was filled with a cloud of the glory of the Lord (2 Paral. v. 13, 14).* This bright cloud, called *shechinah*, is said by Jewish tradition permanently to have overhung the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple, as it overshadowed the tent containing the Ark of the Covenant in Moses's time (Exod. xl. 34-38), a sign of God's presence there. The verse of Psalm lxxxv. 9, *ut inhabitet gloria in terra nostra,*

That the glory in our land,
As of old, may dwell enshrined,

is a prayer for the restoration of the Shechinah after the Babylonian Captivity. But dearer far to God than Solomon's temple is the house which He has sanctified for Himself in Baptism, the body and soul of the Christian child. There God's eyes and heart are all days that that child lives in His grace. He loves that child as He does not love other creatures. God is where He loves; and where He loves with a special love, there He is with a special presence. Hence St. Gregory Nazianzen says that if ever a Christian is tempted as our Lord was by Satan to adore him, he should answer: "Fly, foul fiend: or rather, if either of us is to be adored, do thou adore me: I am the image and likeness of God, I am clothed in Christ, I am changed into Christ by Baptism: come and adore me." St. Gregory here is repeating St. Paul's words: *As many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ* (Gal. iii. 27); and *Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ?* (1 Cor. vi. 15.) As he says, *this is a great mystery* (Eph. v. 32), this union of Christ with the faithful, and consequent indwelling in us of the Holy Ghost, the same who dwells in the Sacred Humanity of Christ. It is a mystery, as the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is a mystery. We can tell a few things about it: we cannot explain it. Little would it profit us that Our Saviour is present in the Blessed Sacrament, if He did not send His Holy Spirit to dwell in us by grace. The former presence is a means to the latter. Jesus is present on the Altar and comes to me in Holy Communion, to keep me and to strengthen me in the state of grace, to

give me more sanctifying grace and a firmer hold on sanctifying grace than I had before. That must be a very excellent possession, which so great a gift as the Blessed Sacrament serves as a means to establish. It is indeed the possession of God Himself, the beginning of an eternal possession of Him, if we are faithful.

XXII.—THE LOSS OF SANCTIFYING GRACE.

SANCTIFYING grace is not lost, as one might lose one's purse, by inadvertence or accident. Rather it is lost as one loses money by foolish purchases, which is called "flinging money away." So do men and boys fling sanctifying grace away for excitement and pleasure. Sometimes also they surrender it through cowardice. But it is never parted with except by the full and entire consent of the will here and now acting: nothing short of that makes a mortal sin. There were heretics in the early Church, who taught that there was no forgiveness for mortal sin committed after baptism. The effect of such teaching would be, not to restrain people from sin, but to plunge them into despair after they had committed it, and make them add sin to sin, as desperate men will do. Beaten in this attempt at heresy, round goes the devil to the other side, and puts thoughts of this sort into my head: 'There is no sin too great to confess and be absolved from,'—so far the orthodox theologian,—'and not only no one sin, but no number of sins,'—orthodox theologian again: 'therefore sin freely, and gratify yourself fully, and then confess it: when you have sinned once, sin five times more; six sins are confessed and forgiven as easily as one,'—most false and

unorthodox conclusion, quite in Satan's manner, which is to begin well and end badly. In urging the facility of repentance, Satan is not at all desirous that I should repent, quite the contrary: and therefore before sin it is, not after it, that he urges upon me how easy it is to confess and be forgiven: his object all the while being to get me to sin so often that sin may fasten upon me like a serpent, and then I shall grow weary of repenting, and some day death may surprise me in sin. That is his artifice. And to that artifice I shall fall a victim, when temptation is continual and strong, if I have no higher motive to go upon than a prudent care of escaping hell. I need to love God, and holiness, which is the presence of God in my soul. I lose Him when I cease to love Him and to value His being with me. Then I turn my Divine Guest, the Holy Spirit of God, with ignominy and insult out of my soul, saying, 'I can have Him back when I will.' If I go on further to add mortal sin to mortal sin, I am as one who pelts with mud and stones the Guest whom he has already driven from his door, and all the while says to himself, 'Some day I must have Him back again, for I cannot afford to go without Him in the end.' And this Guest is my God and Sanctifier! The fear of hell is good: but much better is the love of holiness; in other words, of sanctifying grace. If I commit a mortal sin, I may have to pay for it in hell, and I may not, I do not know. But one thing I do know, that when I commit a mortal sin, I lose the grace of God that instant. And sanctifying grace is the best thing about me, whoever I am.

XXIII.—GOD OUR FATHER.

When Jesus was in a certain place praying, when he had ended his prayer, one of his disciples said to him : Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. Our Lord perhaps never heard a request with which He was better pleased. And he said to them : Thus then you shall pray (Luke xi. 1, 2 ; Matt. vi. 9). What then did He teach them ? He did not teach them to fall prostrate on the earth, to cover their faces with their hands, and cry : Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. No, that prayer He left to the seraphim, who stand round His throne in heaven (Isaias vi. 2, 3). But man, weak man on earth, He commanded to raise his eyes heavenward, and dare to say, Our Father. This was to be the fruit of His passion and death, the obtaining for man of a Divine sonship, or as St. Peter puts it, that men should become partakers of divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4). Therefore on the day of His resurrection, as it were announcing the fruit of His sufferings, our Lord gave Mary Magdalen this message for His Apostles : I ascend to my Father and your Father (John xx. 17). So at Mass, before the consecration, which represents the death of Christ, we say, bowing down with all humility before our Creator, Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus ; but after the consecration, with hands outstretched to heaven, audemus dicere, Pater noster. By the gift of sanctifying grace given us in baptism we are born of God ; and as sons of God we receive a right to the kingdom of God, the inheritance imperishable, and stainless, and unfading, which is reserved for us in heaven (John i. 12, 13 ; iii. 5 ;

1 Peter i. 4.) By mortal sin we do not cease to be son, but we are sons disinherited and in disgrace, till we repent and sanctifying grace is given back to us. Only in hell is the sonship, that was given in Baptism, quite taken away: the lost are God's children no longer, *they are cast off from thy hand*, the Psalmist says (Psalm lxxxvii. 5). But we are God's children at present, and hope to be so eternally, not by any fiction of poetry, as when Homer calls his chief deity "father of gods and men," but by real and, we may say, legal adoption. Our path in life will often be steep and rough and uncertain and dangerous. In such perplexity and alarm faith comes to the aid of reason. Reason loses herself in fruitless reflections on the ills of life; and the more she broods over them, the more discontented and unhappy she is apt to grow. The evil is too much for her. Faith passes on, unheeding of these desponding complaints, to lay her head on the bosom of a kind and almighty Father, trusting Him to bring good out of evil, to guide His children through the nipping frosts and chill fogs of discouragement, and take them home. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the realisation of good not yet seen.* (Heb. xi. 1.) Never will God desert the soul, that through all the sorrows of life keeps up a believing, loving trustfulness in Him as its Father.

XXIV.—MONEY.

MONEY is power, but not goodness. Money is grandeur but not wisdom. "As each one is in God's eyes, so much he is and no more": so said that lover of religious poverty, St. Francis of Assisi. God our Lord

has no respect for riches. Rich people, as such, are no favourites of Heaven. And really, if we think of it, a man is neither a better nor a wiser man for having ten thousand a year. He is stronger, no doubt, and can plan and carry out many works, which are impossible to the poor. *All things obey money*, says the Wise Man (Eccles x. 19), and we call money the sinews of war. The State wants money, the Church wants money, without money nothing can be done in civilised society. Money is for purposes of this world what grace is for the world to come. Our temptation is to take this world for all-sufficient, and then we naturally take money to be all-sufficient, as though all good things came to man with money. When a rich man speaks, men listen: thereupon he imagines himself wise. When a rich man does anything, men praise it; and he takes himself to be virtuous. Nay, he seems to have that which is better than virtue, more honourable, more real. Though the rich man be not virtuous, he comes in for the temporal reward of virtue, namely, honour. The rich man is often disliked, he is never despised. He is always respectable. He is a person whom it is worth every one's while to flatter. He moves like a king in society, scattering largesses, bestowing patronage. Thus he mistakes the power and responsibility, which undoubtedly are his, for wisdom and goodness, qualities which he may have, but the having of which does not at all follow from the fact of his being rich. Many rich men are fools, even for matters of this world, and many more for matters of the world to come. *Thou fool, this night do they demand thy life of thee; and the things that thou hast*

made ready, whose shall they be ? That is what God said to the wealthy landowner; and our Lord adds: *So it is with the man that lays up treasures for himself, and is not rich unto God* (Luke xii. 20, 21). If I come in for a fortune, everybody will pay me attention: I shall be flattered on all sides: I may live in splendour and luxury,—and all the while I may be a mean man and a coward, a fool and a debauchee, without brains, without heart, without conscience; no good on earth except for my money, and that I misspend: and when at last I leave it all behind me, I may find my portion with the rich glutton, who died and was buried, and in hell lifted up his eyes and cried for Lazarus and one drop of water at the end of a finger, being tormented in that flame (Luke xvi. 23, 24). Jesus Christ never pronounced the rich happy: He said just the opposite (Luke vi. 20, 24). Never, then, will I mock any one because he is poor: it is not the conduct of a gentleman. Never will I vaunt myself because I am rich: it is the most vulgar form of vanity. A long purse is like a long examination paper: no one is ever vain of that, but rather afraid. God will examine me on the whole matter of my possessions: how shall I answer His questions?

XXV.—THE PRAISE OF MEN (I.).

FAR be it from us to say that the praise of men is utter vanity. Praise is an encouragement to good. All who are trying to do good need encouraging. More good would be done, if good people were better appreciated and more praised for their efforts. There is so much

evil in evidence in the world that goodness is apt to feel lonely, and the steps of good people hesitate and falter in uncertainty of the road, or in despair at the difficulty of further progress. The doer of good work is allowed to go unsupported, checked, thwarted, disappointed, dubious. A word of praise, especially coming from a high quarter or from the lips of a dear and trusted friend, is to him like a light to the mariner at sea, assuring him of the way that he is making. But no man of right taste delights in fulsome praise, in high-wrought or effusive compliments. No right-minded person loves to have his work compared with and preferred to that of others. In all praise comparisons are odious. It is the style of advertisements, *So-and-so's so-and-so is the best*: this should be left to the rivalries of tradesmen. No modest man loves to be the hero of a crowd, to be greeted with shouts of applause and displays of bunting, least of all when he has reason to apprehend that they who shout and hang out their flags understand very little of the merits of his performance. The modest man endures such ovations patiently; or if he is pleased, it is for the commendation of a good cause, or because others are pleased, for he welcomes a gleam of sunshine on any human countenance for that man's own sake and to the glory of God, giver of joy. Praise is not unlike certain liqueurs, good in small quantities, good when distilled from choice materials by a judicious hand. *Laudari a laudato viro.* After you have dined well, you may drink a small glass of liqueur; and after you have done well, you may be treated with advantage to a word or two of praise, in case you are uncertain of the

goodness of your work, or of its acceptability to those whom you are bound to consider. Few mortals are brave enough to live wholly without praise and without visible success, doing great good in obscurity, with their efforts unrecognised, ignored, put down, only noticed to be found fault with. If ever I am in office,—even if I am only captain of a cricket team,—I will be no mere fault-finder and repressor. I will have eyes for the good points of my subordinates, more than for my own. And I will know when to speak words of encouragement and praise. *Golden apples in beds of silver*, the Book of Proverbs call his utterances, *who speaks a word well-timed* (Prov. xxv. 11).

XXVI.—THE PRAISE OF MEN (II.).

HE is not a healthy man, who requires stimulants to his every exertion,—a cup of coffee before he rises in the morning, two ounces of spirits to prompt his eloquence, a quart of ale to take him up a hill. Still less is he likely to be healthy, who lives to drink, making the absorption of alcohol the main business of his life. The boy who can start no work unless he is primed with flattery, the boy who flags and droops as soon as the sunshine of applause fails him, is not quite so blameworthy as these tipplers, inasmuch as praise is a nobler stimulant than drink. All the same, he is not a healthy-minded boy; and unless he looks about him for a better motive than human praise, he will not do much good in the world, and may readily be led into much evil. To live principally for praise is sinful, as it is

sinful to live principally for drink. In both cases an idol is erected in the heart, and God is put out of His due place. This is what our Lord blamed in the Pharisees: *All their works they do to be seen of men* (Matt. xxiii. 5; vi. 1-5). And this was the fault of some of the best men of antiquity, as of Cicero and Pliny the Younger, who from their writings seem to have trod the earth as actors tread the stage, playing a part, parading their powers, and for ever wondering what the spectators or posterity were thinking or would think of their performances. Very different were the motives of St. Paul in his glorious career. *As to me*, he tells the Corinthians, *it is a thing of very little account how I am judged by you or by human judgment, but he that judgeth me is the Lord: therefore judge not before the time, until the Lord come, and then shall every man have praise from God* (1 Cor. iv. 3-5). I then will wait to have my praise from God,—to have praise from Him who alone can appreciate me duly for what I am worth, *who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of hearts* (1 Cor. i.c.); have praise from Him who alone can reward me adequately to my desert and my desire, as He said to Abraham, and in Abraham to every true believer, *I am thy reward exceeding great* (Gen. xv. 1); have praise from Him who is my supreme Master, and *to his master the servant must stand or fall* (Rom. xiv. 4).

XXVII.—THE PRAISE OF GOD (I.).

By 'the praise of God' we might understand the praise that God gives us, as St. Paul says: *Every man shall have his praise from God.* But God will praise them that praise Him, as He says: *Whosoever glorifieth me, him will I glorify* (1 Kings ii. 30). We will speak here of the praise that men and other creatures give to God. To praise God is the end and purpose of all creation. *Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise ye him, stars and light, mountains and all hills, fruit-trees and all cedars, beasts and all cattle, kings of the earth and all peoples: let everything that breathes praise the Lord* (Pss. cxlviii., cl.). To praise anyone is to declare his excellence. This may be done either by what we say, and then it is called *formal praise*, or by what we are of his making, and then it is *objective praise*. Thus the statue of Athena on the Acropolis at Athens was the *objective praise* of Pheidias, the sculptor who made it: in plain English, it was a credit to him. All creation, so far as it has any good in it, and does its own proper work, is a credit to God, it gives *objective praise* to God. The brightness of the sun, the magnitude and multitude of the stars, the regularity of the planets in their orbits, the fresh vegetation of spring, the waving corn and fruits of autumn, the ice and snows of winter, the expanse of ocean, the rushing rivers, the blue sky and the storm cloud, the abounding life of birds, beasts and fishes, the beauty of man's body, the ingenuity of his mind, the strength of his will, all arts and all sciences, all that rightly delights us in nature and human history, all this shows forth

something of God the Creator, all is a credit to Him, all is His praise. *The heavens are telling the glory of God* (Ps. xviii.). In all these creatures God is manifested, as the mind of a poet in his poems. Even in wicked men God finds His *objective praise* or *glory*, inasmuch as there is much natural good about them, for instance, a healthy body, a subtle mind, learning, courage, statesmanship, artistic skill. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above* (James i. 17), and is a credit to the Giver, even though the receiver puts it to foul use. Sin alone, as such, gives no glory to God, nay it robs God of His glory, the sinner making himself in a manner a disgrace to his Creator. But after the sin is done, God recovers His glory upon it, the glory either of His justice in punishing, or of His mercy in pardoning. Even in hell, the theatre of His just anger, the *objective glory* of God is found: but more of it appears in heaven, the theatre of His mercy. Hell is the lesser, heaven the greater glory of God. Thus A.M.D.G. (*ad majorem Dei gloriam*—to the greater glory of God) is the motto of every undertaking that helps towards the salvation of souls. Every supernatural good work is A.M.D.G.

XXVIII.—THE PRAISE OF GOD (II.).

Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, his praise is in the assembly of the Saints (Ps. cxlix. 1). The sun that warms and enlightens our earth, those countless other suns, immense sources of energy, which we call the fixed stars, all praise God with an *objective praise* simply by being

what they are, works of His hands, mirrors of His perfections. Take a man in the natural perfection of his body and mind, a highly-trained, cultured, able man, he, too, praises God objectively by the being that he has; and this is a more excellent praise than the praise of the starry heavens, as mind is more excellent and more god-like than matter. But nothing of all this praise can compare with the praise and glory that is given to God by one little child baptized and still in the grace of his baptism, or by one sinner contrite and absolved and restored to grace. The better the likeness of God in any creature, the better the praise. There is more likeness of God in a flower than in a rock, in an animal than in a flower, in man than in other animals, in an angel than in a man. Therefore in the natural order the angel's praise of God is the highest and the best. But sanctifying grace is the perfect likeness of God stamped upon a creature, as perfect a likeness of God as any mere created nature is capable of receiving. Here is a statue, there an outline sketch of the same man : what a difference between the two likenesses, how much more perfect the one than the other ! But all that difference is slight as compared with the difference there is between the likeness of God that is by grace and the likeness of God that is by any gift of nature, even of angelic nature. A baptized child is a more glorious image of God than an angel would be, who, without fault of his own, were an angel merely, and not further a child of God by grace. The difference between them would come out in this way, that, were that child to die, his soul would be admitted to the vision of God face to face, from which

that angel would be excluded. Therefore, after telling of the praise of God that is of *sun and moon, and stars and light, and beasts and cattle, and young men and maidens*, the Psalmist passes to a *new canticle* of praise that is *in the assembly of saints*, in the members of the Church living in the grace of God upon earth, and still more in the members of the same Church who are now glorified saints in heaven, saints, or holy souls seeing God, even though uncanonised and uncanonisable, for *this glory is of all his saints* (Ps. cxlix.), and some day, please God, shall be of me. As I wish to praise God and glorify Him, and thereby to accomplish the end of my creation, the first and chiefest thing I have to do on earth is to live in the grace of God.

XXIX.—THE PRAISE OF GOD (III.).

THE *formal praise* of God is the acknowledgement of His greatness and goodness by His rational and intelligent creatures, that is, by men and angels. This praise is often called in Holy Scripture ‘confession,’ in the sense of ‘acknowledgement.’ *Spera in Deo, quoniam adhuc confitebor illi* means ‘hope in God, for I will still confess to Him,’ or ‘praise Him.’ The Psalms and the Church Offices are full of acts of *praising* God, *confessing* to His Name, *glorifying* Him, *blessing* Him, *thanking* Him, all which acts are so many *formal praises* of God. Now why does God wish and require to be thus praised? Because He is Master of the house, which is this world of His creation; and the first thing which any master of a house requires is to be acknowledged and greeted by

all the household, and by all the visitors to the house. Cicero in one of his letters relates how in a villa that belonged to him an acquaintance once strolled in and went looking about. Cicero found him, accosted him blandly, and asked what he was looking for. "Oh," said the man, "I thought So-and-so was here," and turned on his heel. "Strange behaviour," remarks Cicero to his correspondent. Much more strange behaviour is it to live in this world and to take no notice of God, to say no prayers, have no faith and no religion. "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be Lord" (*Te Deum*). Every act of faith in God's word, as declared by the Church, is such an acknowledgement, every prayer and act of worship, every confession of sin, every temptation surmounted in God's name. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is a signal and most worthy acknowledgement of God's sovereign dominion. All these acts are *formal praises* of God. We live to do these acts from time to time, and our life is lived in vain, if we never do them. The Saints and Angels in heaven do them incessantly. Their *formal praise* of God is continual, ours should be frequent. They never cease to cry, *Holy, holy, holy* (Apoc. iv. 8). We should never cease to be holy, never cease to be in grace: in that way our *objective praise* of God ought to have no interruption. Day and night we should be a continual credit to our Creator and Redeemer; and, moreover, at certain times, our hearts and lips should utter the formal and express language of praise.

XXX.—LONG VACATION IN HEAVEN.

I COULD easily make a list of things more or less trying and laborious, that are at school, and at home in vacation time are not. Let me think of some of the things that try me now, and shall not be in my heavenly home, in the long, long, everlasting vacation, the eternal rest of the just. There shall not be in heaven *anything unclean*, no sin, no sinful gratification: such *abominations*, such idols of guilty passion must be broken by contrition and cast out of my soul by absolution, before I can *enter in there* (Apoc. xxi. 27). There shall not be in heaven any temptation or any inclination at all to sin. Sin will be as distasteful then as the corruption of a rotten carcase is now. Then it will be impossible for me to think, say, or do anything otherwise than as I ought. There shall not be in heaven a world arrayed against Christ, no heretics, no scoffers, no persecuting tyrants: but *the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day* (Isaias ii. 11). The devil shall not come near the gate of heaven, from whence once and for ever he *fell like lightning* for his sin (Luke x. 18). There shall not be in heaven any overtaxed strength, any wearied body, any jaded mind: there shall be no illness and no pain. There shall be in heaven no misunderstandings, no controversies, no strifes, no wars. There shall not be in heaven any machinery of production, but that which is better than production, life full and entire, for not in the making of things outside himself does the happiness of man consist. There shall be no sermons in heaven, and no tedious prayers. There shall be neither faith nor hope

in heaven, but faith shall pass into sight and hope into possession of God. In heaven the Sacraments themselves shall cease: no longer in signs and mysteries shall God deal with His elect: *but mouth to mouth shall he speak to them*, better than He spoke to Moses; and they shall *see the glory of the Lord* (Num. xii. 8). *And they shall see his face, and his name shall be upon their foreheads* (Apoc. xxii. 4). I count the days to the next vacation: God, my Father in heaven, has numbered the years, and the number of them is known only to Himself, within which, if I am faithful found, He shall take me to my rest in His *everlasting arms* (Deut. xxxiii. 27). May no base gratification of the flesh, no lack of faith or courage, no headstrongness, no pride, come between me and that long vacation! May I never be thrust into *outer darkness* (Matt. viii. 12): *amen, come Lord Jesus, come, my Saviour, in Thine own hour, come quickly, and take me home* (Apoc. xxii. 20).

XXXI.—SUCCESS.

WHATEVER profession I take up, I intend to do my best to succeed in it, to succeed and even to excel. *In all thy works be excellent*, says the Wise Man (Ecclus. xxxiii. 23). If success does not come, it shall not be for want of effort on my part. A good Catholic, standing high in his profession, is a great support to the Church. His example shows that the life of the world to come does not mean the wrecking of the life that now is. But is there not danger of vainglory in this pursuit of success? To this question St. Ignatius makes answer

as follows :- "When a good soul thinks of doing something that may turn to the glory of God within the area of activity that the Church allows, and thereupon encounters some temptation not to do it, the tempter alleging specious pretexts of vainglory, then the soul should raise its gaze to its Creator and Lord, and if it sees that the thing is not contrary to God's service, it ought to take the very opposite course to the course suggested by the tempter, and say with St. Bernard : *I did not begin for you, and I will not leave off for you.*" Besides, success in any profession is not attained except by hard work, and hard work is a wonderful cure for vainglory. Hard work crowds out thoughts of vanity. Work is hard, because we are weak. Hard work reveals our weakness, and humbles us. Real hard work is not work done with facility and zest, as when a healthy lad runs his mile. Real hard work is gone through in spite of reluctance and pain, and occasional inability to proceed : it is as the limping, hobbling gait of a lame man. The advantages that men are born with, or come in for without labour, or possess henceforth in comfortable security without further need of effort, such are the advantages most likely to turn a man's head with vainglory. Still, labour as we may, some of us will never attain success in this world. God has His own way of treating every soul. Some He leads to heaven by the road of temporal success, but many by the way of failure, poverty, and humiliation, the same by which Himself, as Man, mounted to His heavenly throne. Never was there to human eyes such an utterly hopeless failure as Christ Crucified. Accused, found guilty, and condemned, dying

the death of a felon and of a slave, deserted by His friends, mocked by His enemies, apparently forsaken by God, and His wonder-working powers taken away from Him—would He not have come down from the cross, if He could?—in this plight our Blessed Saviour closed His eyes, beholding with His last glance what appeared to be the ruin of His work and the failure of His mission. After such an example, no Christian need be surprised at disaster. There must be other avenues to heaven than the way of the “prosperous gentleman.” I will work hard to succeed in my profession; and if, with all my hard work, I fail and die a ruined man, still *this hope is stored up in my breast* (Job xix. 27), that my Saviour will love me the better for my failure, and that I shall be the nearer Him in that account in paradise.

XXXII.—UNWHOLESOME READING.

THERE comes a time in life, to some people earlier, to others later, when they have to give up eating unwholesome food. Or perhaps it would be more true to say that food, which was once wholesome, becomes unwholesome with the advance of years. Certainly the wholesomeness of food depends largely on the state of the consumer. And the same may be said of reading. A grown man may safely read much that would do a boy harm. He will not misunderstand and misapply what he reads: he is not so subject to tricks of imagination: he knows evil better, and the spell and fascination of evil upon his soul is considerably broken. In weary hours, as in illness, or after an examination, or on a

journey, we may properly distract ourselves with reading which would be a waste of time, were we in good working order. It is terrible waste to fill our best hours with such trivialities. It prevents the formation of those tastes which are the making, and in later years the solace, of the educated man. But there are reasons more nearly touching my soul's salvation, why I should be careful of my reading. If I am happy in my surroundings, satisfied with the authority that I live under, and like my school, then some one comes and tells me all manner of lies about my Superiors and their views and conduct in my regard, and I listen and believe him, all my happiness and content is gone. I ought not to have listened, I ought not to have believed. That way groundless discontent lies, and I should have avoided it. So of books and publications of all sorts that vilify and ridicule the Catholic faith. By the grace of God I am firm in my faith; and I should show my firmness in my faith and preserve it by putting such unwholesome reading far from me. There is other unwholesome reading that is called 'immoral,' books and papers and illustrations, the whole gist and tendency and purpose of which is to insinuate and suggest and tacitly recommend sins against purity. From this evilly suggestive literature I should turn away. There is no good in it even for this world, and nothing but evil in it as regards the next. God keep me in peace and sanctity, a lover of good books.

XXXIII.—LORD, ARE THERE FEW SAVED?

OUR Lord was journeying through the towns and villages on the way to Jerusalem, there to suffer death for us, when some one came up and asked Him exactly the question that we should have liked to put : *Lord, are there few saved?* What was He to reply? Suppose He had answered : ‘Oh, no, nearly all men will be saved, very few will be lost.’ What easy-going, what laxity would have followed upon such a declaration! He answered therefore, not to the gratification of our curiosity but to the profit of our souls : *Strive ye to enter in at the narrow gate : for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able* (Luke xiii. 22-24). *They shall not be able*, because they have not *striven* : they have sought the Kingdom of God after a fashion, but not with sufficient earnestness ; and, our Lord warns us, there shall be *many* such. How many? Shall there be many more saved? Shall the lost be comparatively few? Our Lord has left His Church no revelation upon this subject : consequently no answer returnable to these enquiries carries the certainty of faith. On such an open question preachers have said strong things, and theologians have divided on this side and on that, with more or less of probability. Father Faber in his *Creator and Creature* argues that “the great mass of believers” are saved. But there is one class of people who are all saved. Who? All priests? No. All religious? No. Who then? All who pray. Prayer is knocking at the gate of heaven ; and we have our Lord’s assurance, *Knock, and it shall be opened unto you* (Luke

xi. 9) : *ask, seek, knock* (Matt. vii. 7). *Asking* is done in a moment : but that is often not enough to gain what you ask of God. I must *seek*, as people seek a lost purse, or other lost property. *Seeking* then denotes earnestness of petition. Still, if I do not find, I must further *knock* and wait, as people wait at a closed door, as *Peter continued knocking* (Acts xii. 6). Finally, I must ask such favours, spiritual and temporal, as, if granted, will not be hurtful to my soul. "Let all your requests be spiritual, and you shall certainly obtain them," says St. Chrysostom. Ask, and fear not to ask, for temporal favours, as health and victory, yet so that they make for the salvation of your soul. "Ask for great things, and small things shall be given you into the bargain," is a traditional saying of our Saviour. It is in substance the saying of the Gospel : *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you* (Matt. vi. 33). No one, I persuade myself, enters heaven, who has not either prayed much or been prayed much for. But my salvation is too precious to me for me to leave it to the charity of others. I should not go into deep water, and lie there passive for some one on the bank to have the charity to pull me out. I will help myself and pray for myself.

XXXIV.—SELF-RESPECT.

SELF-RESPECT is often another name for pride. A disobedient person will talk of what he owes to himself. But there is a Christian self-respect, and it supplies the best working motive that I can find to keep me out of mortal

sin. There are many things that a person who respects his state, or even his dress, will not do. Job *rent his garments* before he went and *sat on the dunghill outside the city* (Job i. 20 ; ii. 8). You do not meet a Master of Arts with a coal-sack on his back : nor would an Alderman in his robes ask for an alms. Here is self-respect restraining the outward conduct of men, being the respect that attaches to outward things and to an exterior, visible state. But what shall restrain the thoughts and motions of the heart ? Clearly some internal state is needed, and a dignity not visible to the eye. Such is the state of grace and the dignity of a child of God. *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him*, says our Saviour (John vi. 57). And after fulfilling His promise of the Blessed Sacrament to the Apostles, He says to them : *Abide in me, and I in you : I am the vine, you the branches* (John xv. 4, 5). He is not speaking of the mere reception of Holy Communion, a momentary and passing thing ; but of an abiding permanent state, which that reception goes to enhance, a state which lasts when the communicant is in the wilds of Africa, hundreds of miles away from the Blessed Sacrament. And our Saviour does not say, *abideth in the thought of me*, but *abideth in me*. What does that mean ? That his hands, feet, heart, head, all his senses and faculties, the whole man, body and soul, is Christ's, the property of the Word made flesh,—more than that, as it were a part of Him, one with Him, as the body with the Head. And the Spirit of Christ and His Father dwells in him ; and he is no longer a mere servant, but a friend, a younger

brother of Christ, and thereby a child of God and heir to heaven. All this is downright written in Holy Scripture, and is of faith (1 Cor. iii. 23: vi. 15, 16: xii. 27: Eph. i. 23; v. 30: Gal. iii. 27: Rom. viii. 16, 17). Such is the state of grace: it is life everlasting begun on earth. As Jesus Christ did not begin to be God when He ascended into heaven, but was God at Bethlehem, at Nazareth, and on Calvary; so is the Christian the child of God, and lives in a manner the life of God, from his baptism onwards, that life which, when made perfect, is to be his everlasting happiness. But that life is not unfailingly and securely mine, so long as I am on earth. I may lose it by mortal sin; and I am capable of mortal sin until my dying day. I want a strong, working motive to keep me out of mortal sin. I shall find no motive more helpful for that purpose than the Christian self-respect that goes with a humble confidence of one's being in the state of grace. Sanctifying grace is the highest gift of God, a higher gift than visions and ecstasies, a higher gift than the priesthood and the religious state, as a mountain two thousand feet high is a bigger thing than the twenty-foot cairn that crowns it. When a Pope goes to heaven, it is not because he has been Vicar of Christ on earth, but by right of the sanctifying grace with which his soul was clothed when it left the body. And the same sanctifying grace is given to me. An old King of Sicily used to animate himself to live and die a King by the reflection: "A King's robe is a noble winding-sheet." So it may be, but sanctifying grace is a nobler and a better.

XXXV.—ACTUAL GRACE.

WE converse one with another, and the current of our thoughts is changed by meeting with the thoughts of our neighbours. We are influenced by what we hear. Now it would be a strange thing, if my fellow-man could alter my thoughts by speaking to me, and God had no such power, could never say a word to me nor I to Him. It is not to be expected that God should call to me miraculously from the clouds. My conversation with my fellows is not miraculous: it is an ordinary incident of daily life. Is there no means of conversing with God? Ought not such conversation to be an ordinary incident of spiritual life? Yes, we can converse with God and God with us, and that in no miraculous but in quite an ordinary way. When we pray, we speak to God. And what is God's answer? Actual grace. Actual grace is the direct speech of God to my soul. It is not any infusion of knowledge. It is not telling me any point of learning, or general information: otherwise it would be a *revelation*, and we have no business to expect revelations. God will not teach me my catechism by revelation. It is however sometimes a telling me of something I did not know before. It is sometimes a telling me of God's will, my duty in a particular case, or possibly a counsel of perfection. There are priests and religious who recollect to the instant, when God first clearly made known to them His will that they should be what they are now. These are very precious actual graces. At other times God stimulates my conscience, reminding me of some article of faith, or fact connected

with faith, to keep me from sinning. At other times, addressing Himself directly to my will, He puts heart and life into me and courage in His service. I wonder where this joy comes from. It is an actual grace, and is called consolation. After I have done wrong, I may perhaps get another actual grace, called remorse. Without actual grace, I can do no good work availing for salvation, I cannot repent of sin, I cannot merit heaven. Actual grace is often given where sanctifying grace is not: else no one in mortal sin could repent. Where sanctifying grace already is, actual grace is given continually to bear it out, guard it, and render it fruitful in good works. God's Holy Spirit is whispering continually, not to the ear and senses, but to the heart and soul of the child of His love. These whisperings of actual grace do not force our free will: we may be deaf to them and disregard them, and so we often do. Oh if we would listen to God!

XXXVI.—NEED OF ACTUAL GRACE.

IN the days of St. Augustine of Hippo there lived a Welshman, whose name was Morgan, which he Latinised into Pelagius, meaning 'of the sea.' He was what is called a 'man of character,' of originality and strong views. One of his strong views was this: that reason and free will and knowledge of the law are sufficient to enable a man to do good works and merit heaven thereby: actual grace, he said, was not required to make works meritorious of heaven possible, only to make them easier. This view was combatted by St.

Augustine ; and, supporting St. Augustine, the Church has defined that, to do any work meritorious of heaven, a person must, first, be in the state of sanctifying grace ; secondly, he must be aided by actual grace. Hardly any good work is done without some effort. There is nearly always some temptation either to omit the work or not to do it in proper fashion. Thus the overcoming of temptation is almost a necessary condition and element of every good work. There are temptations that may be overcome, as Pelagius said, by reason and free will alone, without any grace. The heathen often overcome temptation in that way. It would not be true to say that a pagan is never victorious over sin, or that he falls as often as he is tempted. The pagan does win some victories over sin, but not victories that will be rewarded in heaven. But to overcome sin steadily and regularly under severe temptation, is a thing that cannot be done without the aid of actual grace. Nay, no slight measure of actual grace will prove sufficient : we want "specially abundant aids," *auxilia uberiora*, as theologians call them ; and without this special abundance of actual graces we are pretty sure to sin and fall from the state of grace, when tempted repeatedly and severely. How are these specially abundant aids to be had ? By prayer and the Sacraments. If we do not pray, if we neglect the Sacraments, the abundance of grace dries up, and in the corruption of our nature we sin. The sinful Christian says that he cannot help sinning, that he cannot resist temptation, that the evil of his nature is too much for him. The fact is that he does not really want to resist : he loves the temptation and

welcomes its approach: he will not use the means to get the grace of victory: his prayers are short and careless, the Sacraments he neglects or receives perfunctorily, and in temptation the last thing he thinks of is prayer. He is not a heretic: he has never heard of Pelagius: nor would he knowingly maintain any proposition condemned by the Church. But in practice he proceeds as though Pelagianism was true. He takes his soul into his own hands away from God, and a pretty business he makes of it. He must come back to God, cling to God, know that the Divine companionship is victory in temptation and triumph in conflict. He must ask for actual graces, abundant and efficacious, and he shall receive them.

XXXVII.—STORE OF GOOD THOUGHTS AND HOLY IMAGES.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, then he saith, I will return into my house, the soul of the man whom he has left, *and coming he findeth it empty* (Matt. xii. 43, 44). That one word *empty*, used by our Blessed Saviour, contains a fund of instruction for me. The word in the Greek means *at leisure*, but *empty* expresses the sense very well. There was nothing going on in the house: there was nobody there. The devil came in and took up his quarters, as one goes and sits down, unquestioned and unopposed, in a room when the occupant is out. When a Greek refused to see a visitor, he employed a phrase more literally correct than ours. The servant (or slave) did not say, *Not at home*, but said honestly,

Master's not at leisure. Rather a rude answer, but the right answer to return to an enemy like Satan, *the thief*, who *cometh but to steal and kill and destroy* (John x. 10), under pretence of amusing us. We must be too busy to see him, too full for him to find place with us: we must crowd him out, send him away, and return his wares, *Not wanted*. "Any stone," they say, "will do to throw at a dog"; and any lawful thought or interest may serve to keep out a temptation. Empty-headed, frivolous, tasteless persons soon acquire a taste for evil. That is the value of a good education as a natural aid to virtue; and though supernatural aids, as grace and the Sacraments are immeasurably higher, yet natural means to good are never to be neglected. Let me consider what the education which I am receiving means, and how, if I use it well, it will help me to keep out the devil and his base suggestions. I want some thing good and something ennobling to fill my memory and take hold of my imagination. For this purpose there serves, first, *physical* education, training in games and bodily exercises. God knows, and guardian angels must see with pleasure, how much sin is prevented in English youth by football and cricket. There is *literary* and *scientific* education. A studious boy is so far forth a good boy. He must possess some power of self-denial and resistance to passing impulse, or he would not be a student. His attention is bestowed on harmless enquiries as to the structure of a sentence or the solution of a problem. He is apt to grow up a sensible boy: now a sensible boy does not love folly, and there is folly in all sin. *Artistic* education is educa-

tion in fine art. Science deals with truth, mechanical art with utility, fine art with beauty, as for instance, painting with the beauty of colours, and music with the beauty of sounds. Artistic education may be misdirected, and become a great ally of Satan. So in fact it is in many a resort of fashion. There are three uses of art: (a) secular and innocent; (b) religious; (c) lewd. The first is good; the second—from a spiritual point of view, not necessarily from an artistic point of view—is better: the third is bad from a spiritual point of view, and usually also from an artistic point of view. The use of the first and second is so to fill and satisfy the imaginative appetite as to crowd out the third, and render it nauseous even to taste. Suppose in later life I become a great frequenter of the Westminster Cathedral. Suppose I live to see its internal decoration fairly well advanced, and to hear its choral services brought to perfection. Suppose I appreciate every line of the structure, every figure in the mosaics. Shall I not be less likely then than I otherwise might have been to frequent the most shameless operas in Paris? And will not the very mention of those Parisian performances be apt to move me to disgust? Then I shall have got “store of good thoughts and holy images” to screen me from temptation. I should look about even in my school life for anything in my surroundings that may help that way, and build in my mind an art gallery of good things.

XXXVIII.—GOOD WILL AND EVIL WILL.

"SIN is never committed except by the will," says St. Augustine: that is to say, as St. Thomas explains, it is committed by the will as prime mover, and by the other powers as controlled or controllable by the will. Thus I sin by passion when I give way to sinful anger, because I have no will to restrain my passion, being able to restrain it and not choosing to do so. The stroke of a murderer's arm is sinful, because his guilty will directs the blow. I may sin by the will when I sin by no other power, the other powers not being at present available, as when I wish to gratify my revenge, and am not able, because I cannot get at my man. And the other way about of virtuous acts. The fighting of a soldier in a just war is a virtuous act, in so far as he is set on to fight by a patriotic will. If he is lying helpless in hospital, his will to serve his country is still virtuous. But that is not a good will, which fails to put the other powers in motion, when they are available, and fit opportunity for their exercise occurs. Thus, if it is time to rise, and I a healthy boy knowing it still stay in bed, it is absurd my pretending that I have a good will to rise. A good will is an effectual will, that puts into exercise the powers at its command. In the case supposed, I have no real will, or *volition*, to rise, only what is called a *velleity*. I see reason to rise, and would obey it, if I were not so comfortable as I am. *Velim, non volo*. But when my other powers act independently of the will, there is no sin. It is not a sin to feel cross in the morning, when I have been deprived of half my night's rest.

When I have been much hurt by something said to me, and thereupon all manner of wild thoughts come rushing into my mind, and I am much excited, in all that excitement there is no sin, so long as my will has no part therein, or so long as I can honestly say, 'I do not want those thoughts, and wish them gone.' This doctrine of a good will should be a great consolation to all people trying to be good. If I cannot always think as I wish to think, or cease to feel that which I would gladly be insensible to, still less can I command events in the world about me with any absolute command. I cannot command success, I can only try for it: sometimes I shall secure it, often I shall fail. But events in this world are temporary: they happen, and they are over: good will and evil will are everlasting. No doubt, evil will may be cancelled by repentance, and good will may be departed from by sin. That is one act of will replacing a previous act. But good will and evil will are everlasting in this sense, that at the day of judgment, when the course of mortal history is all run,—when successes shall have passed away and be no more, and failures also shall have vanished as though they had never been—the one thing found to stand over and remain will be the good will and the evil will of mankind. The good will of the elect shall endure to their everlasting reward; and the evil will of the reprobate shall also endure, the accursed root of their eternal misery. We read in the Revelations of St. Gertrude that our Lord once said to her: "Child, whatever you do, keep always a good will: you will gain more by that than by anything else in the world." I shall not be always a successful

man: but God grant that I may ever be substantially a man of good will.

XXXIX.—THE REIGN OF SIN.

Let not sin reign in your mortal body to obey the lusts thereof (Rom. vi. 12). By reason of Adam's sin the body is mortal and being mortal, it is liable to the assaults of sin. But to assault a place is a very different thing from taking it, and still more from reigning there. To reign is to be supreme, to have undisputed possession, and to be obeyed without contradiction. Though one may fall into sin occasionally, sin does not on that account reign in him. Sometimes he resists, and sometimes he falls. After a fall he repents, and after repenting he falls again. There is a struggle going on between Christ and sin, which shall finally have the throne of that heart. Neither as yet has it all his own way: neither can be said to reign at present. Sin reigns when it has passed into a vice. One sin does not make a vice. A vice is a strong confirmed habit of sin. Such a habit tyrannises over free will. Whenever sin comes in view, the bad habit of vice drags the will to embrace it; and the will does so as a matter of course; as though it could do no otherwise, as though it could not resist; and indeed it is very hard for the will in such a plight to resist. Here our Lord's words have their fulfilment: *He who doth sin, is the slave of sin* (John viii. 34). Aristotle says that whoever is come to this pass, is incurable. That is not true. Aristotle knew nothing of the power of the grace of God. But the cure is not easy even for grace, and may take a long time. I must be before-

hand with sin, and never let it grow in me to a vice. But it will grow into a vice all too quickly, once I let it in freely and with little or no remorse. Sin, my ruin, or Christ, my Saviour, which shall finally reign in me? Christ became man to be King of men, as He says, speaking of Himself to His Father: *Thou hast given him power over all flesh* (John xvii. 2). In love of Him, in subjection and conformity to Him, we resist sin: away from Him, we are weak as water and as yielding. *What the law could not do*, i.e. what mere knowledge of one's duty could not secure, namely the keeping of the commandments, *in that it was weak through the flesh*, by reason of the strength of fleshly temptation, that has God made possible and easy, by *sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh* (Rom. viii. 3). Yet, according to His ordinary providence, the Son of God reigns in our mortal bodies *in the midst of enemies* (Ps. cix. 2). There is that in the best of us, which is *not subject to the law of God, neither can it be* (Rom. viii. 7). "Not that the man cannot be subject," says St. Augustine, "not that the soul cannot be subject, not that the flesh itself, as it is the creature of God, cannot be subject"; but there will always be a certain bent and tendency in men on earth to break away from God; and as that rebellious tendency never totally disappears in this life, but has always to be watched and checked, therefore St. Paul says, it *cannot be subject*. But Christ may reign in me for all that. And so, dear Lord, I invite Thee: so thou shalt reign.

XL.—HUMAN RESPECT.

THERE is no subject on which I less like being spoken to than on human respect. Ere now, I have felt grateful to some Lenten preacher or giver of retreat for having spared us the traditional homily on human respect. Talking of this subject is like talking of danger to a timid man: it only makes one more timid. Well then, it is some consolation to hear that human respect is by no means a bad thing in itself. Human respect is a regard for the opinions and observations of the persons we live with; and that we ought to have. He would be a shameless person, who had no regard whatever for the opinion of his neighbours: he might be expected to speak and act outrageously. Closely allied to human respect is the quality called shyness. Now shyness, though a hindrance to doing good, often withdraws one from evil. A shy boy is commonly an innocent boy. A boy always afraid of giving offence will not do much harm, unless he has the misfortune of being thrown with wicked companions who take to him. Human respect however is easily carried too far, and then it is a weakness. Excessive human respect is not without some foundation in vanity, and even in pride. It is a foolish fear of making a fool of oneself; and that supposes an undue desire to figure creditably in society. The excess of human respect is better cured by one or two acts of overcoming it than by a week's lectures. Still considerations go for something. Though motives of faith are better, we should never despise the aid of natural motives to good. Here then are three natural considerations, three philosophic

thoughts. (1) When I feel afraid of the gaze of men, afraid to do before their eyes what my conscience bids me do, let me ask myself: 'Do I owe any of these gentlemen money?' 'No, certainly, I am not beholden to any of them.' 'Why then cringe and cower before them, like a debtor at a meeting of creditors?' (2) The secret of making other people at their ease with me is for me to put myself at my ease with them. Let me then do what I have to do as a matter of course, as though it were the most obvious thing in the world. People who *see* it will probably accept it as obvious, and there it will end. There is a story of a thief who stole a clock from an assize court while the judge was sitting. He simply came with a ladder, took the clock down, and carried it off. Everybody in court supposed that he was some workman taking the clock to be cleaned. (3) I may say to myself: 'I have principles, the people about me apparently have none: the thing I have to do is the scientific thing, the correct thing; they are unscientific, no judges of the matter.' I should go about it as an artist, or man of science, goes on with his work, regardless of loungers, and smiling if they attempt to criticise him. To clench the matter, here are two further motives of divine faith. (4) *The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof* (Ps. xxiii.). Who are these people looking on but God's creatures? Does not God see them and me? And shall I fail to do the Master's work, in the Master's own house, in the Master's presence, for fear of what the servants may say? (5) *Whoever shall be ashamed of me before men, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed, when he cometh in his*

majesty (St. Luke ix. 26). These are my Lord's words. Fie on me, when I am ashamed of Jesus Christ. Fie on the son, ashamed of his father! And woe to the son disinherited! woe to the soul to whom Christ shall say at the judgment day: 'You pretended not to know Me: now I know you not.' St. Peter once laid himself open to this woe, when he denied Christ, saying to the servant maid: *Woman, I know him not* (St. Luke xxii. 57). There was human respect leading to a great fall. But St. Peter wept bitterly for this act of weakness, and repaired it by the glorious confession he made of the name of Christ in Rome unto martyrdom and the death of the cross. And so in Peter have been fulfilled those other words of his Master: *Whoever shall confess me before men, him also shall the Son of Man confess before the angels of God* (St. Luke xii. 8).

XLI.—'PRIEST-RIDDEN.'

ONE mark of a silly man is a fondness for hurling at his neighbour cant words,—“parrot cries” they have been happily called,—quarrelling on deep issues, which he has never fathomed and does not understand. ‘Priest-ridden,’ ‘priestcraft,’ ‘sacerdotalism,’ are such cant words. Undoubtedly, a man may be priest-ridden as he may be lawyer-ridden, or tutor-ridden. The priest may exercise undue influence, and go beyond his province: so may the tutor and the lawyer. We have even heard of ‘feminine influence,’ defeating the ends of justice, or marring the course of sound policy. Yet this occasional abuse of influence does not rob woman of her place in society, nor the lawyer of his, nor should it rob

the priest of his place, seeing that he is an essential member of Christian society. 'Oh but the priest stands between me and God.' My good friend, are you so very anxious to get to God? Or do you not desire rather to have this world for your portion, and to make the most of this world, without your Maker interfering with you, or His law and the terrors of His justice checking your enjoyment? Be honest, and confess that you hate the sight of a priest, because it reminds you of the life of the world to come, for which you are making no preparation: it tells you of an eternity of happiness or misery, into which you are hurrying with the bias all on the wrong side. Like the Roman governor Felix, you shudder at any reminder of *justice and chastity and judgment to come* (Acts xxiv. 25); and because the priest officially reminds you of such things, you will have none of his craft, you will not be priest-ridden: you prefer to go *without Christ, and without God in this world* (Eph. ii 12), and so you would fain be rid of His minister. Such is the mission of a priest and his message to his fellow-men, to keep the next world in view and use time for eternity.

XLII.—'PRIESTCRAFT.'

'OH but the Priest stands between me and God.' This is the old Protestant complaint. It is difficult for a Catholic to take it seriously. Who cannot kneel down whenever he wills, say an Our Father, and make an act of contrition, without any mortal priest to help him? Who finds it necessary to omit Morning and Night Prayers, because Father This or Father That is not there

to recite them for him? At the same time our every prayer and our every act of contrition is dependent on the intercession of a Priest, no longer a mortal Priest, yet truly a Man, standing between other men and God. This is the very idea of the Incarnation, 'a man between me and God'; and whoever will have none of it, cannot be a Christian at all. This Man between man and God is my Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ, God and Man, and great Highpriest of Humanity, *ever living to make intercession for us.* (Heb. vii. 25). The priesthood of Christ is one and everlasting, and His sacrifice is one, even of Himself (Heb. vii. 24; ix., 25-28; x. 10, 12, 14). Strictly speaking, there is but one Priest in the Catholic Church, Jesus Christ. He baptized me, He confirmed me, He absolves me from my sins, He consecrates at Mass and gives me His own Body in Holy Communion. But how can that be? I look into the Catholic Directory, and count the priests in Great Britain, 3,100. Well, suppose there is a King, ruling, like King Assuerus, over 127 provinces (Esther i. 1), and he keeps a viceroy in each, how many Kings are there? One. No number of viceroys, so long as they are all viceroys of one monarch, can make a second King. The priests that one meets and converses with, in their priestly capacity, represent Jesus Christ. In his own natural powers, as a breathing, thinking man, Father Ferdinand or Father Alonzo could no more absolve from sin, or consecrate in Holy Mass, than he could create a new planet. He says the sacramental or sacrificial words in Jesus Christ's name, and Jesus Christ, recognising that man as His accredited agent, gives the

words their effect. It is as when a clerk, a poor man himself, signs for a wealthy firm, being empowered to do so. A firm is not multiplied by keeping a multitude of clerks and agents all over the world. The priests, whose names you see in the Directory, are our Saviour's clerks, not His partners. They act for Him, and only in His name, never in their own except as representing Him. Jesus Christ is not content with remaining in heaven, and discharging the functions of His priesthood there. On the other hand, it would be a miracle not befitting our present state, if He were to go all over the earth, Himself visibly administering the Sacraments. What then does He do? By an act of Providence suited to human conditions, He does what chiefs and leaders amongst men commonly do, as they cannot themselves be everywhere: He sends His agents all over the land, and their action is His action. Such is the sacramental action of every Catholic priest, it is Christ's action. Thinking of this, anyone who believes in Jesus Christ should have a horror of the word 'priestcraft': it comes near to being a blasphemy. No doubt, priests are men; and, as men, they do other things besides administering the Sacraments, or ruling and teaching the Church; and these things have been at times wicked and crafty and meddlesome things, quite out of the scope of their sacred calling. But in so acting they are not behaving as priests; and for their evil doings some other name should be found than 'priestcraft.' Let me remember this truth, couched in learned Latin words: *Antisacerdotism is Antichristianity.*

XLIII.—CHARACTER.

‘THAT boy has got no character.’ A strange saying, sometimes uttered by our elders. Can it mean anything? Can it be true? Is not every boy either good or bad? And if he is good, has he not a good character; and a bad one, if he is a bad boy? No, it is not so. Character (literally, ‘a mark’) is something cut deep in the soul and lasting. A boy may be neither good nor bad, but a blend of both qualities. And if he is good, his goodness, likely enough, goes not very deep down in him, and is not warrantable to last. Thank God, he is at present good: he has a good disposition, but not yet a formed good character. For the boy with a bad character, one does not like to think of such a creature: a school is no place for him, but possibly a Reformatory, and he will not be welcome there. A boy without a character is quite an intelligible person. He is a boy in whom nothing goes deep, neither good nor evil. If he is still quite a young boy, that is no bad sign. But for a boy well on in his teens to show no evidences of character, may well alarm those responsible for his education. Education has been defined ‘the formation of character.’ The art of moulding in clay turns out clay figures of men and other animals. If, after days of moulding, the clay has not yet the least likeness to dog or elephant or man, but remains a shapeless mass, something is wrong either with the clay or with the moulder. There is something wrong about the living clay of a great lump of a boy without character, wrong either in him or in the manner of his bringing up. A boy with a character is a boy with

a will of his own for good or for evil—a fixed will, not a mere passing impulse. All great men are men of character; and all good men, whose goodness any way approaches the goodness of the Saints, are men of character too. Herod the Great had a character: so had Oliver Cromwell: Pontius Pilate had none, nor Herod Antipas. SS. Peter and Paul were both men of character: though St. Peter's fall reminds us that under strong temptation mere character cannot be relied on without prayer. Character does not mean insubordination and rowdiness. A quiet obedient boy may have a character, if he is a boy who can pray, in the words of the 118th Psalm, *Lead me into the path of thy commandments, because that same I have willed*. Obedience paid on principle is the obedience of character. Obedience paid in a listless way, yielding to anything for a quiet life, is no virtue at all. Obedience paid by one who is trembling all the while with indignation at the command, and yet obeys in silence because God wills it,—where the thing commanded is not manifestly wrong, and is within the authority of him who commands it,—is a fine quality of obedience. We may say to the boy who thus obeys: "there is stuff in thee." A boy without character takes ever what mechanists call the L.L.R., the line of least resistance. He goes where it is easiest to go, from which fact you may form a probable conjecture where he will go in the end. He will be good with the good, slack with the slack, and wicked in wicked company. He will do nothing for himself, wants to have everything done for him, likes to be as those about him are. He never goes his own way, not even when it is the right way. Well, I

fear that is myself all over. I fear I have no character: how am I to get one? By doing what is right, because it is right: by doing what I ought, not that things may go easy with me, but to please God: by doing things that naturally I have no mind to do, when I think that Christ my Saviour asks for them. This rule I may apply to such things as rising promptly in the morning, the labour of study, declining a bad book when I am offered a read of one, observing Friday abstinence among non-Catholics, hearing Sunday Mass at the loss of an excursion. One cannot but have some character, if one is conscientious.

XLIV.—COUNSELS OF FATHER OLIVAIN'T.*

FATHER OLIVAIN'T counselled these things to a young Frenchman entering upon the dangers that beset youth in modern society.

(1). Holy Communion once a week. No doubt, the good Father knew his man, knew at once the possibility and the need of what he advised. All such recommendations are relative. It is impossible to lay down one rule for all. Some souls will be saved by weekly Communion, and hardly, if at all, by anything short of that. And even that may be too little. Pius X. has gone beyond Père Olivaint. The one unchanging principle is this: Holy Communion is not, as the Jansenists would have had it, a reward of virtue: to put it plainly, Holy Communion is a means to overcome mortal sin and escape damnation.

* *Vie de Père Olivaint, S.J.* pp. 322 sq. Father Olivaint was one of those put to death by the Paris Commune in 1871.

(2). When people try to draw you into religious controversy, observe two things :

(a) Do not argue : but state the Catholic truth, so far as you know it ; and, for the many things that you do not know, say that you have never studied theology, and offer to introduce them to a priest.

(b) If you must argue, follow this rule of strategy : never stand on the defensive, but attack the other man's position. Ask him what he has to offer as a substitute for the Catholic faith,—little enough, you will find.

(3). Three classes of people may seek your company : —(a) good Christians : (b) good men of this world, steady men, but not Christians : (c) men at once unchristian and unsteady, no good either here or hereafter. This third class of people you should cut dead : they are as idle as drones, yet sting like wasps.

(4). For immodest sights, you cannot but see them in a place like Paris. See, but do not look : that is to say, neither look for them nor go on looking at them : see them as you would see an acquaintance whom you had no mind to encourage to make up to you. See what you must see, in all simplicity, and the good God will stand by you.

(5). At your entrance into 'queer' society, all depends upon putting on a bold face for the first fortnight. Once assert yourself for good, and you will be fairly free.

XLV.—SATAN AND ALL WICKED SPIRITS.

THERE is a proverb : "Talk of the devil, and he will appear." We do not want him to do that : we seek no sensible evidence of his disgusting presence. But we do want him recognised, detected, and found out. He operates to best advantage when ignored. There are those who believe neither in God nor devil. And there are those who believe in God, but not in the devil ; or, if they cannot resist the manifold testimonies of both Old and New Testament to his existence, at least they leave him out of all reckoning, and are annoyed when bidden to beware of him as of a present hostile power. On the other hand you never find a very holy person who has not a keen sense of the devil's activity, as indeed our Saviour Himself had. We had better copy the spiritual tactics of the Saints, and not march without reconnoitring the ground where so insidious an enemy lurks.

The Church tells of a spiritual world, intermediate between us and God. Standing before the throne of God are the angels in their thousands (Daniel vii. 10), *and the spirits of just men made perfect* (Heb. xii. 23) : they all take interest in us, and pray to God for us when we pray to them. Sometimes, but rarely, they have appeared to men on earth. Then there are the souls in purgatory, who need our prayers, and have been known to appear begging for them. There are also the lost souls in hell : they rarely, if ever, are allowed to appear to men : they seem cut off for ever from all influence on human affairs, except inasmuch as "the evil that men do lives after them," bad books, bad music

bad laws, and the like. Lastly there are, not one but many devils, as many evil angels as fell with Lucifer, probably thousands upon thousands. The Scriptures represent both good and evil angels wandering over the earth (Zach. i. 8-11: Job i. 7: Apoc. xvi. 13, 14). St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises* bids us contemplate how Satan "gathers an assembly of countless devils, and scatters them, some into one city, some to another, and so all the world over, omitting no provinces, places, states of life, or persons in particular." And lest modern man should do as he is apt to do, and drop the devil from his thoughts, Leo XIII has enjoined us to pray daily after Mass against "Satan and all wicked spirits, who wander through the world for the ruin of souls." Some think that, as every man has a guardian angel, so also is he beset through life by one particular devil, told off to injure him. There are devils, it is thought, who tempt to particular sins, some to blasphemy, some to impurity, and some to one species of impurity, some to another. The devils are most busy with souls in whom they detect the greatest capacity for good or evil. Though there are many devils, yet, since they form one vast conspiracy against mankind, and work under one chief, we speak ordinarily of 'the devil,' meaning both Satan, who is the fallen angel Lucifer, and all evil angels who abet him. Earth and air is full of these wicked spirits (Eph. ii. 2: vi. 12). Though they cannot search our hearts, they are clever and experienced readers of all outward signs of thought: they probably overhear most of what we say, and witness what we do. Every evening, in her official night prayers,

called Complaine, the Church reads aloud the warning of her first Chief Pastor after Christ : *Be sober and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour : whom resist ye, strong in faith* (1 Pet. v. 8, 9).

XLVI.—SATAN'S WAY.

OF the number of land animals that man commonly meets with, the serpent is one of the few that never does him any service, does not even minister to his sport : it remains his deadly, dreaded, and irreconcilable enemy. Its motions are stealthy and swift, and they had need to be so : for wherever man sees a snake, he crushes it, if he can. At the opening of the Bible, and again at the close (Gen. iii. 1-15 : Apoc. xx. 2.) Satan is introduced under the figure of a serpent. His name of 'Satan' means 'adversary' : he is the insidious, unrelenting adversary of man, stealing on him unawares, seldom daring to show himself. *While men were asleep, the enemy came* (St. Matt. xiii. 25). His ordinary name of 'devil,' *diabolus*, means 'slanderer.' Christ is our *advocate with the Father* (1 St. John ii. 1) : the devil is the false accuser. False accusation and slander go no way with God : but with men they prevail. This is the secret of the "lies as the father that begets them, gross-palpable," that are told about the Catholic Church in England, about monks, nuns, priests, and Jesuits, and are believed ; are confuted and exposed and apparently stamped out, and then revive again and hold up their heads in undiminished assurance. This is the explanation of a people, naturally sagacious and a lover of fair

play, forgetting all rules of logic and all principles of justice, when things Catholic are at stake. The Slanderer is about. One who knew him well, even the Judge who sentenced him, describes his whole character in four lines: *He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth, for truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of lies* (St. John viii. 44). An expert in lying suits his story to his hearers; and, speaking to an intelligent audience, will take care to say much that is true. So, for critics and scholars, the devil has small but poisonous doses of falsehood, wrapped up in a great envelope of truth. And how will the devil lie to me, sensible and well-meaning boy as I hope I am? He will tell me no monstrous stories about the Catholic Church. I should laugh him to scorn: I know my religion better. He will offer me no gross sensualities, that would disgust me. Possibly he may take me on my intellectual side, with some false philosophy, or misread history, or perversion of science. But more likely he will assail me on the side of the things that I love,—some unhappy attachment,—some greed of money,—some straining after honour and the good opinion of the world. Love, money, reputation, three innocent things in themselves, Satan would have us believe to be the three things supremely worth living for, to the neglect of the grace of God. That is Satan's lie. And this is Christ's counter-vailing truth: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you* (Matt. vi. 33), in such proportion as makes for your eternal salvation.

XLVII.—THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH.

“THAT Thou wouldst vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth, we beseech thee to hear us.” That prayer is heard from year to year, or mankind would starve. But now we may ask: Why is the prayer heard? Why is mankind continued from year to year? Why does the world go on? Our Lord could stay its course, and come in judgment to-morrow, if so He willed. If He does not come, it is because there are still more souls to be saved, the number of the elect is not yet complete, heaven is not yet full as it is destined to be filled. Therefore the world goes on, *for the sake of the elect* (St. Matt. xxiv. 22: 2 Tim. ii. 10). Therefore year by year, nay, day by day, *the Lord will give bounty, and our earth shall yield her fruit* (Psalm lxxxiv. 13). Every day a certain number of men die in the state of grace and are saved: every day also, we may piously hope, a certain number of human souls enter heaven, some straight from earth, but probably more from purgatory. These souls are the fruits of the earth, tilled by the labours of our Saviour, and watered by His Blood. This is the tribute of earth to heaven, a tribute of glory, in consideration of which God endures from age to age the wickedness and perversity of mankind. He sees His elect in the midst of the reprobate, as lilies among thorns. He will not yet gather up the cockle to burn, lest the wheat also be rooted up along with it (St. Matt. xiii. 24-30: 37-41). When all the elect are ready to receive their crowns, then will come Coronation Day: for to as many as are saved the Day of Judgment

shall be a Coronation Day, when the elect shall wear their crowns along with their King. So St. Paul speaks of the *crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day* (of judgment), *and to them also that love his coming* (2 Tim. iv. 8). To this end then God gives the earth its increase, and causes it to teem yearly with fruits for the support of man. He wants man, because He wants His saints. And he wants me in the number of His saints. Worshippers on the feast of All Saints fifty years ago, themselves now are among the worshipped. Heaven is filling daily, and my day is to come for entering there. For this I am a Christian : for this is given every grace and every Sacrament, every consolation and every trial. For this I rise every morning and do my work. For this I live and breathe, and grow and flourish, and am active and figure amongst men. This anticipation shall be my guiding hope through life. All other anticipations, efforts, and hopes may fail: the realisation of this will compensate for all.

XLVIII.—A NEW VIRTUE.

A YOUNG theologian once came to his professor in great glee to tell him that he had discovered a new sin. The old man said there were sins enough already, and packed the discoverer out of his room. When Judas betrayed his Lord, and when the Jews crucified Him, those were in some manner new sins. God had never been betrayed before, and there had been hitherto no such sin as deicide. But now all sins are old and stale : generations of men have *wearied themselves in the ways of iniquity* (Wisdom v. 7). It is more pleasant to imagine

a new virtue. There is a virtue, which may be new to the hearing of many of us. It was discovered and named by Aristotle; and he called it by the pretty Greek name of *eutrapelia*. *Eutrapelia* may be defined "playfulness in good taste." Aristotle himself defines it: "a chastened love of putting out one's strength upon others." There is in every ordinary boy a disposition to romp, to play the fool, and to destroy property; a disposition which ought to be sternly repressed, subdued, and kept under by those responsible for the boy's education, beginning with himself. Otherwise the boy can have no place in civilised society: he will turn out a young savage. But though repressed, the disposition should not be killed within him and extirpated altogether. It is a defect of character to have no playfulness, no drollery, no love of witnessing or even creating a ridiculous situation. *Eutrapelia* knows exactly when and how to be funny, and where and when to stop. *All things have their season*, says Ecclesiastes (iii. 1, 4): *a time to weep, and a time to laugh: a time to mourn, and a time to dance*. A proud and quarrelsome man is never a funny man; and it may be doubted if ever an heresiarch enjoyed a joke. Did Calvin, for instance, after he was turned seventeen, ever laugh except in derision of others, that bitter, insolent laughter which Holy Scripture *counts error*, and calls *the laughter of a fool* (Eccles. ii. 2: vii. 4-7)? Many a difficulty, many an incipient quarrel, many a dark temptation is dissipated, the moment one catches sight of some humorous side to the matter. A humble man makes merry over his own misadventures; and when he is inclined to storm and rage, listens to a

good angel whispering in his ear, 'John, don't make a fool of yourself.' A merry boy is seldom a bad boy. A not unfrequent sign of a boy going bad is his losing his merriment, his cheerfulness, and his sunny, open face. He may lose them indeed without going bad, by care and suffering: but the loss is a loss; and when it comes too quickly, it may argue some mistake in the individual's conduct of himself. Life is not all play: indeed it is a very serious thing: but on account of its very seriousness we require some play to set it off. That is why you find excellent men and great doers of good, with an extraordinary faculty, which they use at times, of talking nonsense and playing the fool. *Eutrapelia* is a blend of playfulness and earnestness: without earnestness, playfulness degenerates into frivolity. *O Lord, give me not over to an irreverent and frivolous mind* (Ecclus. xxiii. 6). We generally wear our lighter clothing underneath, and our heavier clothing above it; and perhaps that is the best way for a man, to veil his *eutrapelia* under a serious exterior. But for a boy the other way about is the better fashion: he should be playful and mirthful to the eye, but have seriousness and earnestness underneath, known only to those who know him well. In the earliest days of the Society of Jesus, there was a novice, much given to laughing. One day he met Father Ignatius, and thought that he was in for a scolding. But St. Ignatius said to him: "Child, I want you to laugh and be joyful in the Lord: a religious has no cause for sadness, but many for rejoicing; and that you may always be glad and joyful, be humble always and always obedient."

XLIX.—HEROES.

ONE of the worst features of the paganism of classical antiquity was that its gods and heroes, in many presentations of them, were bad: they were often pictured as seductive types of vice, as people who committed all manner of sins with impunity, without suffering the painful consequences that frequently attend sin in our mortal life, so that the expression 'to revel like an immortal' was used, corresponding with our eighteenth century phrase 'as drunk as a lord.' Thus the Greek youth learnt evil in learning their religion. Whereas we have models of purity and goodness at Bethlehem and Nazareth, they had just the opposite on Olympus. An air of holiness breathes round the Crucifix: the pagan religious emblems were often embodiments of vice. It is a terrible thing for a people when its ideals and its heroes are bad. When the standard is high, as it should be, performances are never up to standard, but they take an upward direction, and there is a constant effort to raise them. That happily is the case with us Christians. But to what depth of degradation must performances sink, when, as with the later Greeks and Romans, the standard itself was low and base! Those pagans came to believe and unblushingly to assert that every man at heart wants to be wicked, and will be wicked wherever the jealousy of his fellows does not hinder him. So much for bad ideals and wicked gods and heroes in the old pagan time. Boys at school still have their heroes, chosen sometimes from among themselves, sometimes from the people that they read and hear of. Boys' heroes

are not always God's heroes. There is a striking instance of this in the first Book of Kings, chapter xvi. Samuel is sent by God to anoint as King in place of Saul one of the sons of Isai, or Jesse. Jesse has seven well-grown boys, tall, athletic, and handsome, much admired in the neighbourhood. They come in, one after the other; and Samuel, as each appears, prays to know God's choice. *And the Lord said to Samuel: Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him: nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.* Thus these seven heroes are all rejected. *And Samuel said to Jesse: Are here all thy sons? And he said: There remaineth yet a young one, who keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said: Send and fetch him. And the Lord said: Arise and anoint him, for this is he.* Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed David King in the midst of his brethren. David was God's hero, a man after God's own heart (1 Kings xiii. 14); and had a great work to do for God, which in the main he faithfully accomplished. Have I any ambition to be God's hero, a boy after my Saviour's own heart? To be such, it is not necessary to be an anointed King, nor to make a name that shall live in history. All that is necessary is to put oneself unreservedly in the hands of God, to make use of each day's grace as it comes, and to cherish a constant hope that some day God will employ me for some great purpose.

Let me not perish ignobly without magnanimous effort,
Effort to do great deed that shall live with posterity after.

(Iliad xxii. 304-5.)

Yes, live with posterity, even though they be unconscious of their benefactor; and, better still, live with God, who remembers and rewards all.

L.—THE WILL OF THE FLESH.

I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is, in my flesh, good (Rom. vii. 18). How are we to reconcile these words with those other words of St. Paul: *Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ . . . that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost who is in you?* (1 Cor. vi. 15, 19). One thing to observe is that these latter words are addressed to baptized Christians: whereas in that chapter to the Romans St. Paul is not speaking in his own person, but in the person of the unbaptized, unregenerate Jew. Then again *the flesh* in the New Testament does not mean simply *the body*, but the appetite and desire of the body. Now appetite of itself is a blind power: it has no more reason than a bull in a field. It is a very irrational thing of that animal to fall in a rage and attack a quiet, inoffensive passer-by, who means it no harm: but what else can you expect of a bull? All the reason which that animal has is administered to it, through a rope and a ring in its nose, and a man pulling. So appetite blindly calls for gratification; it is enough that a thing is pleasant for appetite to want it: of things reasonable, proper, decorous, appetite, as such, takes no cognisance, any more than a bull does of honourable conduct. So the words of St. Paul may be interpreted: *There dwells not in my bodily appetite, as such, any regard for reason or moral goodness.* This is what St. Paul calls *the mind of the flesh*

(Rom. viii. 6), and St. John *the will of the flesh* (John i. 13). Appetite however may be tamed and influenced by reason and God's grace, and thus receive a perfection not originally its own, as some wild animals are tamed and broken in by man. This tamed condition of appetite is the cardinal virtue of temperance, a thing we are not born to, a thing that does not come of itself, but is won by many an act of self-conquest and many a struggle. Whoever will not struggle with himself, can never expect to be virtuous. You do not take a cricket ball into your hand for the first time, and find yourself an accomplished bowler. Nor will you ever be virtuous without many a hard hour of effort and practice. But the virtue of temperance, which means the control of all bodily appetites, is never, under ordinary conditions, perfect and secure in this life. It is a virtue that needs to be nursed and taken care of. One hears sometimes of a yacht having "an ugly list to starboard." Such an original defect of construction may be remedied, partly by some re-adjustment, partly by the managers of the craft remembering and allowing for the peculiarity. But the defect is always there, a thing never to forget in a gale. Remember it, and the yacht may be sailed safely and pleasantly enough. I must remember that by the constitution of my nature, God so permitting, I have "an ugly list" to sensuality. The defect may be three-quarters cured, or perhaps five-sixths cured, but not quite cured in this life (Rom. viii. 6). So I will remember.

LI.—IMAGINATION.

Weak is the will of man, his judgment blind
Remembrance persecutes, and hope betrays :
Heavy is woe ; and joy, for human kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze.
Thus might he paint our lot of mortal days,
Who wants the glorious faculty, assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined :
'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of faith, and round the sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

IN these lines the poet (Wordsworth) tells us what an unsatisfactory thing human life must be to the mortal who lacks the faculty of imagination, and will insist in seeing in everything around him mere matter of fact and plain prose. His prose will be often a sad chapter of blighted hopes, faded joys, and present crushing sorrow. Imagination, like the spring sunlight, brightens the face of everything that it falls upon, and makes us see things fairer than they are, but not fairer than they might be, and shall be when the changeful spring of time has given place to the settled, full summer of eternity, and the faith of things hoped for is exchanged for the vision of things enjoyed. Thus imagination is an alleviation of sorrow, and goes to make a man cheerful. Now, one of the best things that can be done for any man, or any boy, is to make him habitually cheerful. Dark looks often bespeak a thunder-cloud of temptation, that will

break in the lightning and havoc of deadly sin. In these days of breadwinning by examinations, there is danger of too exclusive a cultivation of the faculties of observation and memory and reason, to the neglect of imagination. Thus the mind is filled with hard matter of fact, and the spirit wearied, and the whole nature materialised. In all this there is a loss of true mental vision. The particular something that we see and know and handle for practical purposes ought, if it is viewed aright, to tell us of something else, like it but better, higher and more lasting and more beautiful, dimly appreciated now, to be understood in eternity. This is only saying that the things of earth ought to carry our thoughts to the things of heaven, the seen to the unseen, the kingdom of sense to the kingdom of spirit. Imagination is closely allied to the religious faculty, and supports it well. Should I not pray the better, if my imagination more vividly pictured to me the things of God, the glories of heaven, the sublime terrors of hell and judgment, the mysteries of the life of Christ, the face of my Immaculate Mother, the patronage of Saints, the companionship of angels, the beauty of the robe of sanctifying grace? Truly, imagination is a "glorious faculty," one that no Christian should willingly lack or leave uncultivated. In the noonday of life and business, when the market is full, men are apt to imprison and starve the imagination. Forgetful educationalists, who see nothing beyond the goal of next year's examination, also do their best to extinguish it in their pupils. A dangerous faculty, is it not? Yes, everything is dangerous, out of which great good may come.

Good and evil are taken from the same basket. But I will study the lawful and proper development of my imagination. I will see if I cannot find or form in myself a taste for music, or poetry, or oratorical cadence, or painting, or architecture, or scenery, or the romance of history. Especially will I try to form a taste that shall stand my soul in good stead, as a foretaste of the glory and magnificence of what the poet calls "fatherland, and the great house with high-pitched roof," the house of *many mansions* (John xiv. 2), where my Father in heaven awaits his child.

LII.—DANGERS OF IMAGINATION.

IT is a dangerous thing to cross a street, if you go mooning and forget that you are in the way of wheeled traffic. The dangers of imagination come of forgetting what faculty you are using, of taking the figments of your imagination for facts and realities, as though they were things that you had observed, or reasoned out, and were likely to meet with in daily life. Some refuse the name of *imagination* to this abuse of the faculty, and prefer to call it *fancy*. Thus we have *fancied* wrongs and *fancied* rights, and *fancied* merits, and *fancied* powers, and *fancied* security where there is real danger. Imagination, thus degenerated into fancy, becomes a faculty of self-delusion. No one would be safe on horseback who did not know that he was riding a horse. So when I mount my steed of Imagination, I should know what is carrying me, that I am not then riding that slower surer-footed creature, which I call my Reason. Imagination is then dangerous, when it goes unrecognised for what it is.

Again imagination is dangerous, when it is turned upon dangerous objects. As I may turn my intellect to heresy, and my will to disobedience and pride, so I may turn my imagination upon filth. There is no power in my nature, at all under command of my will, that I may not abuse. As Adam blamed Eve for his fall: *The woman that thou gavest me as a helpmate, she gave unto me of the tree, and I did eat* (Gen. iii. 12): so Adam's children blame their natural appetite for their sin, when they should blame their own wanton and undisciplined fancies. Far from controlling their fancy, they give it full rein, and feed it full on filth, filthy sights, filthy reading, filthy talk. That is the source and origin of evil, not their nature as God made it. Fancy, far more than reality, renders temptation strong. Things as God made them, and as they actually are, have nothing like the attractiveness to evil, which they acquire by the decking out and adventitious charms of fancy. That is one reason why temptation diminishes with increase of years, because we gradually get to know things for what they are worth, and no longer take fancies for facts. Scrupulous people again,—but I do not know what a scruple is. I must be told. A scruple then is, when I have not sinned, and my conscience tells me things are all right, but something besides my conscience makes me uneasy, and I cannot settle down to what conscience assures me of, and between my conscience and that other something I am thrown to and fro,—that is a scruple. Scrupulous people then are the sport of their fancies: they take a strong impression upon their imagination for a consent

of their will. They forget that God has built their nature, so to speak, in water-tight compartments. In consequence of some accidental collision the outer compartment of imagination may get filled : that is no sin : all that has to be done, upon advertence to the mishap, is quietly to shut the inner door and screen off the will from consent. 'Quick and calm' is the word in any sudden danger to soul or body.

The danger of imagination feeding on poisonous matter is not to be averted by stopping its food and starving it, but by allowing it plenty of good food. A fine and well-exercised taste for the beautiful is no small preservative against sensuality. That is why it is well to bring boys up among beautiful and not merely useful surroundings,—the more beautiful, the higher the education aimed at. So William of Wykeham thought, when he built Winchester School under the shadow of his Cathedral, and built the Chapel that still stands to his "New College of the Blessed Virgin Mary," at Oxford.

LIII. — IMAGINATION AND THE SPIRIT OF IMPROVEMENT.

THE accurate man rummages among the materials of history, sorts things out, and tickets them as they bear one on another. The imaginative man erects a living house out of those materials, and peoples it in his mind's eye with the personages of bygone days. Historical romance is not history, but it is an adjunct to history, an incentive to learning history, and an aid to substantiate in the mind history once learnt. It would be

difficult to name two historians who have done more for history among English readers than Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott. The use of history is for example and for warning, but particularly for example, that we may be animated to make the glories of the past live again in the present, and may not be content to take things as we find them and as they are given to us. The imaginative man, full of precedents of the past and visions of the future, is apt to be something of an innovator. 'A meddlesome fellow,' his acquaintance will call him, and 'one who can't let well alone.' Men are made to act in society, to eke out one another's defects and check one another's exuberances. Thus there are men in whom imagination runs in excess of judgment, and who have more of inventiveness than of practical ability. Such men must not be allowed to have the entire administration in their own hands. But neither must the sober-minded men of practice be allowed to have it all in theirs. They are liable to the fault which a parliamentary speaker of the eighteenth century found with the ministry of the day: "they dare not be great." They improve nothing: they are apt to be ruinously economical, penny-wise and pound-foolish. If I find myself one of these sober-minded, practical people, let me beware of self-sufficiency and of despising all the suggestions of my neighbours. An exact mind may be a little mind also. If on the other hand I have the stirrings of imagination, and have recurring glimpses of things being made vastly better than as I see they actually are, there are two rules for my guidance. First, I shall do well carefully to note possibilities of im-

provement that present themselves to me : how our school-house might have been more commodiously built : where money has been wasted tastelessly, or a fine construction spoilt for want of a little further expenditure. How about our playing-fields, our managing committee of games—but, first study of all for me, how I might conceivably be, and really ought to endeavour to become, a more presentable boy to God and man than I know I am. The second rule is this, to distrust my own imaginings. The best that can be said of many of my schemes is this, that they contain one grain of wisdom to nine of folly. I am too young to understand all the conditions of action. My position for years must be one of subordination to my elders. I will not enter upon a province before it is mine, but I will eye it from across the frontier ; and when I come to govern there, as perhaps I may, then, if I am still of the same mind, I will do this and that. The fruit of imagination must ripen in patience. But, early set and long matured, the fruit will ripen one day ; and the thoughtful, imaginative boy proves the versatile and enterprising man.

LIV.—OUR SAVIOUR'S INVITATION.

(St. John xxi.)

OUR Saviour, as we read in the Gospel, once actually issued an invitation to dinner—or we might say, following the Greek and Latin texts, rather to lunch. It was a morning meal : they did not dress for it, except St. Peter, who, we read, *girt his coat about him*, having been previously at work in his shirt sleeves. The invitation

was not sent by servants, nor by post. The Master, in primitive fashion, stood where the entertainment lay ready, and cried, *Come and dine*. The guests were seven fishermen, Peter and John and James and Thomas and Bartholomew, and two others whose names we do not know. The fare was broiled fish and bread. The table was the shore of the lake of Genesareth, rock or grass, as it might be. The drink was water from the lake. The Master Himself served up the repast. There appears to have been very little conversation. The hearts of the company were full of happiness, but they were too awe-stricken to speak. Why awe-stricken? Because, to their own certain knowledge, they were dining with One new-risen from the dead. Within the last month their Host had been nailed to a cross, and had died thereon, and had lain in a tomb with a great stone between Him and the living. And here He was entertaining them, gracious and affectionate, loving and majestic, as they saw Him at supper the night before He died. But His bright and happy countenance, compared with the face that they remembered, told what a load of sorrow had been lifted from His brow meanwhile. It was a meal of simplicity and love. The bread and the broiled fish and the real presence of Jesus, Crucified and Risen again, marked it as a type of the Eucharistic Feast that is perpetuated in the Church. The sculptured figure of a fish appears frequently in the Roman Catacombs as an emblem of our Saviour. The letters of the name in Greek were recognised as standing for *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*.

LV.—THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

I BELIEVE in the resurrection of the body, not as a thing that ever could come about in the course of nature, but as a wonder that God will work according to His promise. We have no expectation of the conversion of England by natural means. It may be brought about by an extraordinary dispensation of Divine mercy. I do not know that it will : it is not an article of faith as the resurrection of the body is ; but I know that saints have prayed for it, and martyrs have bled for it. To anticipate how England may be converted, we can do no better than judge of the future by the past. How were converts made in the early ages of the Church, when conversion so often meant martyrdom ? Old men and young men and maidens, boys too, the rank and file of the Christian army, as well as bishops and priests, died in thousands, in horrible torments, for the faith they had embraced. What animated them ? Cardinal Newman says it was “the Thought,” “the Idea,” “the Image” of Christ,—“the Image of Him who fulfils the one great need of human nature, the Healer of its wounds, the Physician of the soul.” *We preach Christ*, says St. Paul (1 Cor. i. 23), and Christ, preached, believed in, adored and loved supremely, first made converts, and then martyrs. Therefore in England, for the conversion of England, we want, first among Catholics who possess the Treasure, then among Anglicans who yearn for it, a lively faith in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, churches and altars beautiful and well served, Mass

devoutly heard on Sundays, and not wholly neglected on weekdays, Sunday and First Friday Communions, many and well prepared for. We want the Crucifixes replaced, that were broken by the Reformers and the Puritans. We welcome the figure of Christ Crucified, wherever it appears, speaking to the English people, in many a painted window, in the reredos of St. Paul's Cathedral, or hanging over the high altar in New Westminster. We want the Stations of the Cross, and the devotion of the Seven Dolours, and the *Pieta*, or figure of Mary mourning over the Dead Christ. It is a joy on Good Friday to have the Three Hours preached, not in Catholic Churches only, but at St. Paul's and in Westminster Abbey. *In every way that Christ is preached, in this I rejoice and will rejoice* (Philip i. 18). While doing nothing to flatter Anglicans in their heresy, we must have every predisposition to believe that heresy in them is 'material,' unintentional, involuntary, and before God guiltless. We must not discourage and repel men, who have come so far to join us, across such a yawning gulf of dislike and prejudice. The only zeal that will tell in England is a conciliatory zeal, like that which St. Francis of Sales showed: he must be our model. Though a man will not go the whole ten miles with us to the foot of Peter's Chair, we should walk amicably two miles with him, or seven miles, in fact as far as he will go; and where we part, our parting must be resolute, but regretful and friendly, not without hope of rejoining company again. We rejoice in the dear figures of the Virgin and Child, sculptured in stone over the portals of Colleges

and Churches not Catholic,—still more where they are Catholic, and where the image is saluted with all love and confidence. We hail with exultation, as the harbinger of a new era of religion in England, the tower of our Metropolitan Church of Westminster. In the inscription over the great doorway we read an appeal to a faith, which ages of schism and heresy have failed to destroy—faith in the merits of our only Saviour, faith in His Name and the atonement in His Blood, faith in the Kingdom which He has purchased unto God in that Blood (Apoc. i. 6: v. 9).

*Domine Jesu, Rex et Redemptor,
Per Sanguinem tuum salva nos.*

Lord Jesus, King and Redeemer, save us by Thy Blood.

LVI.—SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION.

“I FEEL so good, I don’t know what to do with myself.” So some one once said on an Easter morning, at the end of a retreat. Without being a theologian, he defined by experience the mood which theologians call ‘spiritual consolation’: a mood of joy, but not of the natural joy that one might feel at starting off home for the holidays. In natural joy, one is in a mood to enjoy life and take pleasure in the good things of this world, to eat, drink, and be merry. But the strange thing about spiritual consolation is this, that, though it may amount to intense happiness, yet it does not fling us upon the good things of our earthly existence, but rather lifts us above them and beyond them. This is the “I don’t know what to do with myself” feeling, as

though one now belonged to a higher world, and was suddenly become a stranger to the place and surroundings in which one was accustomed to dwell. This feeling is expressed in St. Bernard's hymn :

Thy lovely présence shines so clear
Through every sense and way,
That souls, that once have seen Thee near,
See all things else decay.

And by Cardinal Newman in his *Occasional Verses* :—

We offer what we cannot keep,
What we have ceased to love.

‘Ceased to love,’ comparatively and for the time being, in comparison with the higher love that sensibly inflames us whilst the consolation lasts. But consolation, like spring sunshine, does not last : it comes, and suddenly is overclouded. A young soul, in spiritual consolation, fancies that its feet have been planted all at once and for ever on heights of sanctity. No such thing : heights in sanctity as in war are won slowly, with groaning and effort. The dark hours of temptation, and of earthly animal inclinations, will return. Consolation is a ‘feeling good,’ a feeling sent from God, still only a feeling : now feeling is not holiness, and not virtue. What then is the good of consolation ? Great good. When God gives it us, we should do what mariners do on a clear night that may not soon recur : they take an observation of the stars, and find out exactly where they are, make a note of the point, and sail on. So in consolation I should take a good look at the great truths of faith, while they stand out, distinct and unmistakable as the rifts and seams of the hills around on a summer day.

I should mark how God loves me, how good His service, how grand a thing is heaven. Then, when a little afterwards I feel nothing of all that, but quite the contrary, I should stand fast, and say: 'No, I saw it all right the other day, and I will hold by it still, though I feel it no longer!' God frequently pours out more abundant consolation in early life than in middle age. There may be two reasons for that. First, because in early life one is more led by feeling, and the sweets of sin are pressed upon one with great danger of our yielding to them, unless God provide some counteracting sweetness. Another reason may be that, just when memory is most retentive, God wishes it replenished with vivid images of Himself and of His goodness, images which the soul may contemplate in the darker hours of later life, and contemplating them may be encouraged to fight God's battle manfully. A blessed thing it is for a man to be able to look back upon a boyhood spent in the *courts of the Lord* (Ps. lxxxiii.), cheered and sanctified by frequent Sacraments and by a tender devotion to the Mother of God. Thus Job in his affliction: *Who will grant me to be as in the days of my youth, when the Lord rested in my tabernacle; when his lamp shone over my head, and in the light thereof I walked!* (Job xxix. 2, 3).

LVII.—SPIRITUAL DESOLATION.

As spiritual consolation is not mirth and jollity,—it is often sweetest when one is weeping over one's sins,—so spiritual desolation is not necessarily sadness. Again, as spiritual consolation is not virtue, so neither is

spiritual desolation sin. Both consolation and desolation are properly feelings; and feelings of themselves are never sins, nor virtues either. Desolation is a feeling of being cut off from one's Creator and Lord. Now the mere worldling, who has quite given up the fear of God and never prays, is not saddened at feeling cut off from his Creator and Lord. He has made up his mind for the separation: he has elected to *serve the creature instead of the Creator* (Rom. i. 25): he is one of those *rich*, who *have their consolation here* (St. Luke vi. 24: xvi. 25): he is *full* now, his *hunger* is all to come (St. Luke vi. 25); and when it comes, it is called 'the pain of loss,' which is the last excess of spiritual desolation, the greatest pain of hell. Desolation is full and complete in hell, and consolation full and complete in heaven. But while all who live at enmity with God are in spiritual desolation, even though on earth in many cases they are not troubled at their state, yet it would be at once against logic and against fact if we were to turn the proposition the other way round, and say that all who are in spiritual desolation are living at enmity with God. The greatest saints have had their hours of terrible desolation of spirit. Thus St. Teresa says, telling her own experience: "All good seems to be lost out of sight and to have fled from the soul, when the devil has spoken to it. . . . Every virtue, even faith itself, was then suspended in me," *i.e.*, suspended from sensible exercise. Cardinal Newman too describes "that strange and painful feeling of unreality, when nothing seems true, or good, or right, or profitable, when faith seems a name, and duty a

mockery, and all endeavours to do right absurd and hopeless, and all things forlorn and dreary, as if religion were wiped out of the world." Never was such spiritual desolation as that of our Saviour on the Cross, when He cried in agony, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (St. Matt. xxvii 46). I wonder if even St. Stanislaus, that saint of brightness and love, dying at the age of seventeen, got to heaven with never a bout of desolation. If so, he only escaped by dying young. The thing to do in desolation is, first, to recognise that desolation is upon us, a sort of spiritual influenza: then, if the attack is a bad one, to call in the doctor, our spiritual physician, or confessor; and he will do something which in the spiritual order answers to putting the patient to bed: he will tell us to remain as we are, to take no new step, to alter no resolution, to deliberate on nothing, to venture on no novelties,—in a word, not to plunge. He will say: 'Just at present you are fit for nothing: keep quiet, lie to, do nothing but what is humdrum and ordinary; and do not believe in the truth of any of the wild thoughts that occur to you, still less act upon any of them.' Such is the prescription of that wise physician, St. Ignatius Loyola: "In time of desolation no change of purpose should ever be made, but one should stand firmly and constantly to one's previous resolutions: because, as in consolation we are under the guidance of the Good Spirit, so in desolation we come under the promptings of the Evil One; and his counsels cannot possibly put us in the way of any right decision.'

LVIII.—ST. ALOYSIUS.

A PROTESTANT, looking at a picture of St. Aloysius, might exclaim: 'Well, this sort of Saint may do in Italy: but he is no model for English boys, and will never attract them.' Facts are against such an anticipation. St. Aloysius has taken a strong hold on English Catholic boys. This seems to be some part of the reward given him of God even on earth, where he renounced so much. Benedict XIII. named him patron of youth; and our Lord, we may say, has ratified and carried into effect the nomination of His Vicar. Then again every Catholic boy appreciates that virtue which is the chief ornament of his age, the virtue of which Aloysius is so brilliant an example, and whence he derives his name of Angelic. Many also are held to the Saint by ties of gratitude: for his intercession on behalf of the young is singularly powerful with God. There are those who ascribe to some devotion done in his honour the settlement of their vocation. On the other hand here is an authentic story of a boy delivered through St. Aloysius from the calamity of being pushed forward to the priesthood against his will. In a clerical seminary in Italy, about the year 1850, on St. Aloysius's day, the boys used to write letters to the Saint, which lay before his statue all day, and then were burnt or given back unread. The Bishop of the diocese insisted on taking up one of these letters, and reading it, to see as he said that the boys did not write nonsense. No representations of the Jesuit Rector, from whom this story comes direct, could stop him. The letter he

happened to get hold of ran to this effect: "Dear Aloysius, my parents will have me here, because they want me to be a priest: I have no vocation: can you get me out of it?" The thing was settled that day. Furthermore it is plain to any one who will study his life, that Luigi Gonzaga was a high-spirited, energetic, and courageous boy, with the makings of a soldier or a statesman in him, one quite capable of filling the high position he was born to. The efforts of the Marquis, his father, to retain him, though he had two younger brothers, Rudolf and Francis, are a testimony to his fitness for being the head of a noble house. People useless in the world are seldom much good in the Church. Heroic sanctity requires high courage. One reason why sanctity is so rare is because high courage is rare. A 'muff' will never make a canonisable Saint. A boy's instinct soon discovers that there was nothing of the 'muff' in Luigi Gonzaga.

LIX.—THE HOLY GHOST GIVEN TO THE CHURCH.

WHEN our Saviour ascended from the top of the Mount of Olives, He left behind Him as the fruit of His Passion, besides His Blessed Mother and some holy women, a small knot of ignorant, frightened men, sitting with closed doors *for fear of the Jews* (John xx. 19), afraid to tell any man the wonders that they had heard and seen. These were His Apostles, or Commissioners, and on them the spread of His Kingdom on earth depended. This was the infant Church; to all appearance, too frail

and puny a child to live. It seemed as though the deed done on Calvary, as the Jewish priests intended it, was to be an ultimate success, and the name of Jesus of Nazareth was to die away from the memories of men. The Apostles sat in silence, they taught no word, they wrought no miracle, they administered no Sacrament: the mighty powers of the priesthood of the New Law lay idle in their hands. The Holy Ghost came upon them, and it was as the change from winter to spring come in one hour. From that hour the Church of Christ has lived and worked and been a reality in practical life. The Holy Ghost breathed life into the Church. He Himself is the Spirit of Life, a sort of Divine Soul animating her. Jesus Christ bequeathed not to the world a theory such as philosophers leave behind them. He bequeathed to the world a working institution, not a mere scheme, not a mere system of ideas, but a living active body. A teaching body, no doubt, with a system of thought gradually to expand, and dogmas in due season to define: but above all, a working system, that would lay hold of men, educated and uneducated, and control their conduct. The Holy Ghost, ever animating the Church, keeps the Church to her work, and saves her from sleeping in libraries, and evaporating in poetry, and being lost in a sweet ecstasy of music and fine art. The Holy Ghost, given to the Church, gets things done, articles of faith believed, commandments kept, sins sorrowed for and confessed and absolved, Communion received, the dying anointed, the dead prayed for, the gates of heaven daily opening to souls elect and saved, the Perpetual Sacrifice maintained, watch kept from

century to century for the Second Coming of the Lord. The Holy Ghost is likewise given to me, in Baptism, in Confirmation, in every increase of sanctifying grace that I receive, whether with or without a Sacrament. This is the work of the Holy Ghost in my soul, to get things done, that I may not be as the fig-tree that our Lord cursed for being all leaves and no fruit. St. Francis of Sales says the devil does not care how many pious plans be formed, provided none of them be carried into effect. "The Holy Ghost," the Curé d'Ars used to tell his parishioners, "is like a man with a good horse and carriage, who offers to take you to Paris. You have nothing to do but to say *yes*, and to get in. It is no hard matter to say *yes*. Well, the Holy Ghost wishes to take us to heaven. We have nothing to do but to say *yes* and let him take us up there." In other words, the one requisite of my salvation is with thorough good will and confidence to surrender myself to the Holy Ghost, *who is in me, whom I have from God* (1 Cor. vi. 19); and day by day, even to the day of my death, he will move me to *walk without stain and to work justice* (Ps. xiv. 2).

LX.—THE DEVIL LOOKING FOR AN AGENT.

ON one of the transepts of the great Cathedral that dominates the City of Lincoln, there is a statue known as "the devil looking down on Lincoln." He is looking to see where he may do mischief. Now the devil cannot do us so very much harm unless he finds a human ally. He is on the look out for an agent. *WANTED, a man or a boy to do the devil's work.* None of us would respond

to that advertisement: the address alone makes us drop it in a fright. It would not do for the devil to advertise openly, or to appear in some dreadful shape, with horns, claws, and tail, and stinking breath. He wants an agent to do his work blindly, asking no questions whose work it is. Like other knaves, he avoids written agreements: but if he were to write out his terms, they might be couched in a letter something to this effect:—

My dear boy, you make over your soul to me, and do my work among your schoolfellows. In return, I promise you ever so much pleasure and gratification for ever so long, never you mind how long; and of course, but this you need not think much about,—it will come all the surer, the less you think about it,—in the end I take you for my own; and the better agent of mine you have proved yourself, the more intimately you shall find me

Yours for ever,

SATAN.

No such letter will ever be written. Still the hard fact remains: there are boys who do the devil's work among their companions, soliciting them to evil, teaching them to sin, and corrupting what would have been untarnished innocence had it never encountered a human tempter. When Pericles, the greatest of Athenian statesmen, was nearing his end, an admirer was recounting his exploits. "You omit," said the dying man, "what I glory in most of all." "What is that?" "It is that no Athenian citizen ever through me put on mourning." He had never prosecuted a fellow citizen on a capital charge. I have much to accuse myself of, much to beg God's mercy for: but there is one thing that I will never do, I will never betray the innocent into sin, I will never commit soul-murder, I will never

grieve the Holy Spirit, and make the angels of God weep, by undoing the wreath of sanctifying grace that crowns my neighbour's soul.

LXI.—PENANCE.

Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (St. Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17). This was the preaching of St. John Baptist: this was the first sermon of Jesus Christ. And again He said twice over (St. Luke xiii. 3, 5): *Unless you do penance, you shall all perish alike*. And He spoke, not very warmly, of *the just who need no penance* (St. Luke vii. 47: xv. 7, 29: xviii. 11). I must make up my mind that I need penance, if I am to be dear to my Saviour. How then am I to do penance? Not by fasting and stinting myself of my proper food: that ill accords with my growing age, and I ought not to do it. I must do penance according to my rule, as a monk does according to the rule of his Order. My rule is the rule of Providence. Providence acts sometimes through the natural course of events, sometimes through my Superiors. In both ways I get things that I do not like, four or five times a week perhaps. A wet day, a headache, a badly cooked dish, the loss of an excursion, the refusal of a permission, a reprimand, ill luck at a game, want of money, these are things that I ought to take in a spirit of penance, as they come from God, as the rule of Providence sends me them. Above all, study is a penance, to grown men, let alone boys. Like most human duties, it has its burdensome and its agreeable and interesting side: but to all

regular students study is frequently a burden. A hard day at one's books is greater penance to many than a fasting day would be, if it could be spent in amusement. The great penance which the rule of Providence imposes on schoolboys is study. An idle boy is either a sickly boy, or he is a self-indulgent boy and neglects the penance, or penal infliction, of hard work proper to his state. Penance again has another meaning : it means repentance. Taking life as it is, we may say that he is the most innocent who most frequently repents, as that house is the cleanest which is most frequently cleaned. The only remedy for our repeated little swervings from God's will is repeated little returns, full of confidence, to that will. What can the lost sheep do but return, if it is not to perish utterly? Now, without being lost sheep, we may be, and probably are, erring, wayward sheep, prone to stray, doing and saying many things that we had better not. Every evening, when we examine our consciences, we must be sorry for these faults and errors : we must frequently confess them : nor must we take it amiss, if superiors, as in duty bound, correct those faults that are public and meet the eyes of others. Taking correction is no small part of that penance which our Lord assures us we are all in need of.

LXII.—WISDOM AND LOWLINESS OF HEART.

THE awful thing about a boy is the amount of life he has within him. How will he use it? How is it possible to guide him? Of a man of fifty we may predict with some confidence what manner of man he will be

till seventy-five, if he live so long: but what will a boy of fifteen do in the next twenty-five years? There is many a strange scene even in the quietest life between the ages of fifteen and forty—many an hour of trial, of suffering, of temptation—may be, of wild folly and sin. My capabilities of sin are almost inexhaustible: once fallen, I cannot tell how low I may sink, or what depth of infamy and degradation I may come to,—as the poet says, “beneath the lowest depth a lower depth.” The dangerous time of life is before the habit of virtue is formed; and it takes years to form a virtue, almost as many as it takes to form a man. What virtues do I want? Taking the Bible for my guide, I find two virtues specially commended, one in the Old Testament, the other in the New. The virtue of the Old Testament is wisdom: the virtue of the New Testament is humility, or let us call it, lowliness of heart. When Solomon was young in his kingdom, the Lord appeared to him, and said, *Ask what I am to give thee.* And Solomon prayed, *Give me wisdom and understanding.* And God was so delighted with the prayer, that He gave him wisdom and much wealth besides (2. Par. i. 7—12). *Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom: he that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul* (Prov. iii. 13; xix. 8). And that we may not want a definition, Job tells us: *the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom* (Job xxviii. 28). Wisdom is what we call ‘being sensible,’ sensible as living under the eye and control of God, who hates excess, and will not have us go all lengths in any direction except in love of Him. He who has wisdom, sets bounds to all his enjoyments: he will not pursue a

quarrel far : he remembers that in most human things it is better to stop when you are half through than to take all you can get of them. He who has wisdom, says much less than he might say ; and seldom puts out all his strength, for in few things is it worth his while so to do. He who has wisdom, abhors strong and violent language, which is a great pest of present times, and ruins men's temporal interest as well as their eternal. The wise man does not call names, nor pour out his personal feelings in superlatives. He abhors extravagance, and coarseness, and all sensual excess, and the frittering away of life upon trivialities. He discerns and averts his eyes from the ugliness of irreligion.

The lowly-hearted man again, *the poor in spirit*, he is Christ's scholar, and his the kingdom of heaven. *Learn of me, for I am meek and humble (or lowly) of heart* (St. Matt. v. 3 ; xi. 29). The good of humility, the virtue of our Lord's own Heart, is that it makes room for all other virtues, and particularly for love of God and one's neighbour : for he who is little in his own eyes pleases his fellow-men, and is readily admitted to union with God. Humility, or lowliness of heart, also has this wonderful property of extracting, so to speak, the sting from all vices, and depriving them of their venom, so that if the lowly-hearted man be wounded by the shafts of sin, as he well may be, yet he will not die of the wound : he will repent and be cured. The proud man will never own that he has been in the wrong ; and therefore,

if he fall, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to rise again.

I shall see examples as I live, among men,—perhaps I have seen them among boys already,—examples of people who will brook no correction, rail at religious authority, utter and sometimes publish words of raging disobedience. *Some men's sins are manifest, going before them unto judgment* (1 Tim. v. 24). What can be done for such cases? They may possibly be succoured by some very meek, prayerful Saint. Or God may overthrow them, as the storm overthrows oaks, and then when they are brought low, face flat on the ground under adversity, His grace may creep up and save them.

LXIII.—MORTAL SIN THE GREATEST OF EVILS.

THE Sieur de Joinville, one of the authorities for the life of St. Louis IX., King of France, tells us how he was once asked by the King whether he would rather be a leper or commit mortal sin, and how he shocked his royal master by answering that he would rather commit mortal sin. We must not condemn the worthy French knight too easily. He probably meant no more than this, that leprosy struck him with much more sensible horror than sin did; and in that he was not to blame. If de Joinville had made his theology in the University of Paris, and had been a Doctor of the Sorbonne, he might have given some such reply as this to the King's question: 'Sire, I know that I ought to incur leprosy rather than commit mortal sin; and though leprosy, I confess, disgusts me

much more than sin does, yet, if I were put upon the choice, I hope with God's grace that I should choose leprosy rather than sin.' It is not a question of feeling, but of choice. Suppose one has been drunk overnight, and in his intoxication has lost the sum of £50: when he awakes next morning, he feels much more annoyed at the loss of the money than for the sin of drunkenness. He may still be in the same posture of feeling the next time he goes to confession, and yet he may have sufficient sorrow to receive a valid absolution, if, recognising by faith that, though the loss is the greater pain, the sin is the greater evil, he can bring himself to resolve that, with God's help, he would not get drunk again, even though by a second intoxication he could recover the money. Nothing short of this absolute preference of His good pleasure will content God, or fall in with what we may call 'the imperial ways' of our Maker. He claims to be loved above all, that is, in every deliberate choice to be preferred to all. The deliberate forsaking of Him, which is mortal sin, is ever to be accounted the last thing that man ever should do—the evil to which, of all other evils, his will should be most entirely averse. God expects us to recognise that our one supreme interest and one great concern is to live in His sanctifying grace, and in that same grace finally to die. Other advantages may affect us more emotionally, but this advantage our will must be resolved ever in practice to prefer. When Queen Victoria was baptized, there was question of naming her Alexandrina Georgina, Alexandrina from the Emperor Alexander of Russia, and Georgina from the reigning King, her

grandfather. But the Prince Regent, presently George IV., stepped in, and declared that his royal name of George should not stand second in any form to any other name : the child therefore was happily christened Alexandrina Victoria. With how much better reason does God our Lord insist that His royal name and claim over us shall stand second to that of no creature ! The prayer, " Rather let me lose everything, even life itself, than lose Thy favour by mortal sin," is not the prayer of a Saint in ecstasy : it is the proper prayer of any and every man who means to serve God and save his soul. The prayer represents the true line, north and south, in which the needle, so to speak, of the compass of our soul should point. It represents our fixed resolution. Nevertheless, under the momentary pressure of temptation, we may break that resolution and give way to deadly sin. Then is the needle disturbed and deflected. What is to be done ? Why, get the compass right again, and renew the resolution. It is the only thing to do : it must be done. By promptly repenting every time we sin, we at last get our needle tolerably steady, and the resolution against mortal sin becomes habitually efficacious. That steady resolution is called *virtue*. A very experienced priest used to say that whoever has lived for two years at a time without mortal sin, after he has grown up, ought to make sure of saving his soul. He is like a man who on the railway has found his way into a through carriage.

LXIV.—WEEK-DAY MASS.

OUR Saviour was crucified in the early days of April and, before May was out, Jesus was ascended into heaven. His crucifixion was already past history: was it to become a mere historical memory? No, the greatest event in the history of mankind was not to be written in the number of passing things: it was not to be borne down in the tide of time: it was to stand out above time. The Great Sacrifice was to be a continual sacrifice. For long years the lamb, typical of Christ, had been offered morning and evening daily in the Temple of Jerusalem (Num. xxviii. 3, 4), a sacrifice in a certain sense continual. The Great Sacrifice, once offered, was to abide in a more perfect continuity, the continuity of unity: for as the Council of Trent teaches (Sess. xxii. cap. 2): "it is one and the same Victim, and the same Offerer, now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the Cross: only the manner of offering is diversified." Where the Church is established, Mass is established. Mass has been said almost daily from the second century of our era, the age of the Catacombs, down to the twentieth century. Every day, *until* the day when *he shall come* in judgment, we *show forth the death of the Lord* (1 Cor. xi. 26). Now what does God in heaven think of Mass? Something very different, probably, from what the generality of men think of it. *My thoughts are not as your thoughts, saith the Lord* (Isaias lv. 8). All things whatsoever men take interest in, God thinks of, knows, and concerns Himself about.

But it may be expected that God's interests are distributed quite otherwise than as men's interests are. Men grow excited over the issue of a battle, victory on this side or on that: God counts the slain, and registers the several dooms of their immortal souls. What wonder then if God cares more about the daily celebration of Mass than about all the other events that happen from the rising to the setting of the sun? "If there is one thing in human life absolutely divine," says Pope Urban VIII. in a Bull printed at the beginning of the Missal, "one thing that the citizens of heaven might envy, if envy were consistent with their state, it is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass." A Catholic, who reflects, can hardly think otherwise. The Mass is the daily open channel of communication between Christ and His Church, as well the Church in its corporate capacity as also its individual members, for whom the Mass is offered, or who make the sacrifice their own by being present at it,—as the priest says to his brethren around him at the *Orate fratres*, "my and your sacrifice." Shall I not hear Mass on a week-day as often as I conveniently can? Nay, shall I not make it convenient to hear Mass as often as I can,—always with this proviso, that the Mass is said every day regularly and punctually to the minute, a punctuality which the laity have a right to expect in these days when all the world has appointments to keep. Let there be no trouble about Morning Prayers. Mass is the best of Morning Prayers: I need no other. But Mass is so monotonous. Not if I understand it. The way to understand it is to become the possessor of a small

Latin Missal, beautiful copies of which now may be purchased, and follow the Mass exactly as the priest says it, marking each day's variety and all the commemorations. A Catholic, who has learnt Latin as a boy, should be ashamed in middle age to avow himself ignorant of the official language of his Mother Church.

LXV.—THE FIVE WOUNDS.

IN the Transfiguration our Saviour appeared in His glory, *and his face did shine as the sun* (St. Matt. xvii. 2). But one thing was wanting to Him, the print of His Five Wounds. By those Five Wounds I shall know Him, when my soul is ushered into His presence to be judged. *They shall look upon him whom they pierced; he showed them his hands and his side* (St. John xix. 37 : xx. 20). Thus is Jesus, even in the splendours of His Father's glory, still *the Lamb standing as if slain* (Apoc. v. 6), still *ever living to make intercession for us* (Heb. vii. 25), not, we may presume, without some reference to the Masses continually said on earth, wherein He is Chief Priest and Victim. By these Wounds I should ask for mercy when I feel I need it, as I often ought to feel. By these Wounds too I should ask mercy for my parents and friends and for my native land, reminding our Lord of His own saying in the Scriptures: *I know the thoughts that I think of you thoughts of peace, and not of affliction* (Jerem. xxix. 11); and again, *Lo, I have written thee in my hands, and thy walls are before me continually* (Isaias xlix. 16). The

Five Wounds were a favourite devotion in England before the Reformation, and frequently appear in such remains as we still possess of fifteenth century art. When the North of England rose in defence of the faith of their fathers against Henry VIII. in what is called the Pilgrimage of Grace, the Five Wounds were embroidered on their banners. In this devotion we see the influence of the Franciscans, with whom it is still a favourite devotion, because of the *stigmata*, or impression of the Five Wounds upon the body of their glorious Founder, a miraculous favour which the Church commemorates by a yearly feast on the seventeenth of September. All the veneration and affection that we can conceive, we should pour out upon the Sacred Flesh of our Divine Saviour. Every devotion that leads us to the Flesh of Christ is good,—as the Church says, “That while we know God in visible shape, we may by Him be ravished unto love of the invisible.” Such a devotion is this to the Five Wounds. Those Wounds are five sources of graces flowing down from heaven to earth, as it is written: *Ye shall draw waters in joy from the fountains of the Saviour* (Isaias xii. 4),—five strong attractions drawing human hearts to God, as again Himself says: *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself* (St. John xii. 32). There is one excellent practice for me to take up. When preparing for confession, after I have examined my conscience, I frequently feel at a loss how to obtain contrition. Let me address myself to the Five Wounds of my Saviour and seek contrition there, and I shall infallibly find it.

LXVI.—THE CUPIDITY OF CURIOSITY.

"THE cupidity of curiosity," says Archbishop Ullathorne, "of all cupidities, is the most destructive of innocence." It is called by St. John *the concupiscence of the eyes* (1 John, ii. 16.) The first sin of human kind was committed under its prompting. Eve was curious at a serpent speaking, and she looked curiously at the forbidden tree, and her mind was full of speculation as to the reason why God had forbidden the fruit thereof: it was not enough for her to know that her Creator had forbidden it. *The woman saw that the tree was good to eat of, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to look at, and she took of the fruit thereof and ate* (Gen. iii. 6). Curiosity is an ill-timed desire to know things. Desire of knowledge is a craving for intellectual food. Food is good: knowledge is good: but not all food, nor all knowledge, is good for all persons at all times. Our ancestors prayed to be delivered—

From a morn that doth not shine,
 From a boy that loveth wine,
 From a wife that know'th Latine.

Knowledge is bad, as wine is bad, when you cannot carry it wisely. Knowledge of evil is bad, when the habit of virtue is yet unformed, and evil is likely to be seen in a false light. Knowledge of evil is not bad in itself. God knows all evil. Christ on earth knew it all. Every man who has had a man's experience knows it. Professional men know it, lawyers, doctors, priests. But with a man's experience comes a man's wisdom; and

there is a special grace protecting every good Christian when he is professionally employed in the business and matter of his profession. There is an Irish proverb, that it is time enough to say 'good morning' to the devil, when you meet him. This may mean that we should not go out of our way to look for evil, we should not forestall its acquaintance. If you will crawl into the jungle to look for snakes, you may get bitten: but, from the snakes that cross your proper path, God will protect you. Medical men love not to see strangers to medicine, or 'laymen' as they call them, dipping into medical books. Such prying people, they say, get nothing but harm from their stolen and imperfect knowledge. They fancy that they have got diseases, which they have not, and so contract the malady of 'hippishness'; and any illness they really have, and try to treat themselves for, they mismanage. There is the temporal evil of curiosity. We get to know the diseases of the soul, and many diseases of the body also, in time, by sad experience in our own persons, or in the persons of our neighbours: we do not find ourselves any happier for that knowledge. I will not anticipate: I will know as God's providence gives me to know: and, long before I die, I shall know *usque ad nauseam*: I shall be sick of the subject, and often may be fain to cry with the nobleman in *King John* (iv. 3);

Away, with me, all you whose souls abhor
The uncleanly savour of a slaughter-house:
For I am stifled with this smell of sin.

LXVII.—THE BABYLONIAN FURNACE.

THERE is sung on Holy Saturday morning the prophecy from the Book of Daniel (c. iii), how the three young Hebrews, who would not adore Nabuchodonosor's golden image, were cast into the fiery furnace, and there were miraculously preserved, chanting the praises of God in the midst of the flames. *And the king said: Did we not cast three men, bound, into the midst of the fire? and do I not see four men, loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and there is no change in them, and the look of the fourth is like unto a son of God?* The fourth figure was that of an angel, whom God had sent to deliver His servants. This is well called a prophecy: for what happened to those Hebrew 'children' as they are called,—they were really young men,—was a type and figure of the future preservation of many a young Christian in the fire of temptation, with evil all around, and yet *there is no change in him*: he is covered by the form of another, who is not only *like unto*, but is the *Son of God*. There are situations in which one has to listen to lewd talk from morning to night, and to see around one only too patent evidences of wickedness of every kind. In such a situation two extremes are to be avoided, the extreme of protesting too much, and the extreme of compliance. The martyrs, as we read in the acts of their martyrdom, for instance, Blessed John Fisher and Blessed Thomas More, were quiet men and said no more than was necessary when they were on their trial. Loud protests are akin to pride; and *pride goeth before a fall* (Prov. xvi. 18). The Pharisees were *confident in themselves that they were just, and despised*

the rest of men (St. Luke xviii. 9). That I must never do, however much I see others misbehaving. They have not been brought up as I have: I could not behave as they do without sinning worse than they. Without pretence of superiority, without fuss, without disturbance, an unsophisticated but firm attitude on my part must tell them: 'That sort of talk has no interest for me, I have no heart in it: as the Latin Grammar says, *narras fabulam surdo.*' People do not really admire sin: it is a great mistake to think that they do: but they consider it inevitable. If one resists solicitations to sin, they either think him shy, one who craves after sin in his heart, but is timid and coy in approaching it,—then they encourage him: or they think him a hypocrite, who sins in secret, but dares not avow it,—and they dislike him: or they think him an insipid tasteless bigot, fanatic and fool, scared by visions of hell, and terrorised by the priesthood,—and they despise him. But when in time they find one out to be no coward; absolutely truthful and sincere; hating sin because one is convinced of the evil and folly of it; fearing hell chiefly because it means the loss of God; prudent and wise in Christ; reverencing Christ in His priests, while quite recognising that the priest remains one *taken from among men*, and *surrounded with infirmity* (Heb. v. 1, 2); chivalrously loyal to our Saviour in the spirit of Peter and Paul and John; in a word, like Moses, *enduring as seeing the invisible* (Heb. xi. 27): when they meet a young Catholic like this,—and there are such,—they quail as before the face of an angel, and are ready to cry out: 'Oh, if all you Romanists were like this, we should not be what we are.'

But if with a little pushing the young Catholic gives way, falls in and goes down with the stream of pollution and is soon outstripping his tempters, what can his companions do but think with disappointment in their hearts : ' We are all bad together, religion or no religion : I should have expected something better of this Romanist : I wonder why he is one at all : but I see all religions are equally useless to keep a fellow straight, while he is capable of enjoying life : religion I suppose is for children in frocks, and ugly old maids, and inmates of hospitals and workhouses and prisons and lunatic asylums, but not for the fair and the free.' So is the glory of the Name of Jesus tarnished in the world : so has God cause to complain of us as of the Jews : *Through you is the name of God blasphemed among the Gentiles* (Rom. ii. 24 : Ezech. xxxvi. 20—23). With the grace of God and our Lady's aid, though all are mean-spirited enough to behave thus, yet will not I. *Esti omnes, sed non ego* (St. Mark xiv. 29).

LXVIII.—MOUNT PARNASSUS.

It is a first principle of Christianity that we are made for great things. The world applauds the principle. With the Book of Evolution in its hand, the world cries out : ' We *are* made for great things.' But on enquiry it turns out that the world promises great things for the race, not for the individual ; and by ' the race ' is practically meant a collection of favoured individuals. The fittest are to survive : the weaklings, sickly and criminal together, are to be stamped out ; only those may and will remain, who have proved themselves

strong enough to commit what Burke calls "great crimes and high misdemeanours." The Church, calling men all and each to be baptized, promises to every baptized soul, that will keep the faith and grace of his Baptism, life everlasting. Life everlasting means the sight of God face to face for ever, the greatest gift that God Himself can give to any mere creature. Compare the state of the most successful of mortals,—the champion athlete, the victorious general, the cabinet minister, the millionaire, the literary or scientific or musical celebrity, with the state of any one of the Blessed in heaven, it is as comparing the stage-king of one night with the real King who wears his crown in the Abbey,—and to point the comparison, you should add that that King is to have no successor, and no cares, but is to reign in glory and in vigour for ever and for ever. Mount Parnassus, the seat of the Muses, is visible from the sea, with its two peaks, celebrated in Grecian song. But at the back of that double peak there rises the real summit of Parnassus, 8000 feet above sea-level, the height of Snowdon piled upon Ben Nevis. The sight of God in heaven is the lofty true summit of Christianity. To lead us to nothing short of that, our Saviour died. But as we are pressing onwards from below, we see other twin peaks overhanging more visibly: they must be our immediate goal. The two peaks are the grace of God in life and the grace of God in death: gain these, and heaven itself is gained. The two points of supreme importance for us to secure are to live in sanctifying grace and to die in the same. On these two connected heights our watchful gaze must ever be fixed. Such is our Saviour's

earnest injunction: *Watch ye, because ye know not the day nor the hour* (St Matt. xxv. 13): that is, live habitually in the state of grace, and so be ever ready to die. For the rest, a Christian will fall in with the interests of an ordinary man: he will make money and spend it, and travel, and see sights, and read newspapers and perhaps a book or two, and make friends, and marry and have children, and bury them, or they will bury him, as the case may be. But in all these things, so far as human frailty will allow, he will follow the rule of the mountain-climber. The rule is, 'Keep your height': never, if you can help it, ascend a subordinate eminence which you will have again to descend in order to reach the summit of the mountain. So the Christian makes it his endeavour not to pursue any worldly interest so far that he will have to repent of his excess and come down from that vantage-point ere he can enter heaven. He endeavours to make every present occupation a step forward in grace and a progress heavenwards. Thus he will 'keep his height'; and no labour of his, even on interests of earth, but will have its value for eternity.

LXIX.—PURGATORY.

"I STEADFASTLY hold that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the suffrages of the faithful." These words of the Creed of Pius IV express all that we know with the certainty of faith about Purgatory, all that as Catholics we are bound to believe. It is not of faith that there is fire in Purgatory: for at the Council of Florence the Greeks, who made a

difficulty in acknowledging this fire of purgatory (though not the fire of hell) were nevertheless admitted to communion with the Church. At the same time it would be rash for any one to take upon himself to deny what is so generally believed by the faithful. Some private revelations lead us to think that purgatory is a wide region, not less wide than earth ; and that the condition of things is not the same everywhere in purgatory, as neither is it on earth : but that some souls suffer more, some less, some one punishment, some another. To all its inmates, however, we may be sure, purgatory is, as earth is called, *lacrimarum vallis*, “a vale of tears” ; and is continually felt as such, as earth is not always felt to be ; so that the Holy Souls are ever *gementes et flentes*, “sighing and weeping” for deliverance. We should not think lightly of purgatory, nor yet be cast down by the thought of it. On the whole, the souls there are better off than we ; they are in a higher state, they live in a Catholic country, they are nearer heaven, they are confirmed in grace, they are sure of their salvation, their trial of faith is over, they have seen their Saviour, they are incapable of committing any even the least sin. Their patience is still greater than their pain, they suffer with all joy and submission, there is nothing in them whatever any longer to resist God. If we could see in purgatory the soul of one whom we had known on earth, we should be amazed and awe-stricken at the change. Once so self-indulgent, now so glad to suffer penance ; once so froward, now so meek : once so forgetful of God, now longing after Him all day long and all night too. Would it not be well for me, if

I could effect some change of this sort in myself before I go to purgatory ? Might I not wish to carry with me out of this world nothing of evil beyond faults of frailty and surprise, mere half acts of the will, nothing of full deliberation although only a venial sin ? Three sorts of venial sins, it is to be feared, meet with severe chastisement in purgatory : first, great uncharitableness, bitter words repeated or even printed, quarrels pushed into standing feuds, and worst of all, envenomed ecclesiastical quarrels : secondly, great disobedience and reviling of authority : thirdly, ill-management through carelessness or neglect of what Canon lawyers call "the estate of the Crucified," whether it be souls committed to one's charge or Church property. Besides, and this touches me more immediately, there are probably thousands suffering in purgatory the temporal punishment due to long indulged habits of mortal sin. The sins, thank God, have been forgiven, and the damnation due to them revoked before death ; but still God's justice is not wholly satisfied, and so the pains of purgatory are substituted for those of hell. This warns me that mortal sin is never a light matter, ready and generous as God is in forgiving it.

LXX.—HOW IS THE GOLD GONE DIM !

How is the gold gone dim, the goodly colour faded ! (Lament. iv. 1). This is more deplorable when it happens in the spiritual sanctuary of the soul, than when it happens, as Jeremias beheld it, in a desecrated material sanctuary, like that of the Jewish Temple. How does

Christian boyhood pass into manhood without religion? St. John Chrysostom, in the fourth century, asks and answers the question thus:—"Why, pray, do those who were walking aright before temptations, after temptations fall? Who is it then who knows well them that are walking aright, excepting Him who alone has formed our hearts and has understanding of all our deeds? Many often of them that seem to be good are wickedest of all in reality." This then is one solution. Such a good boy, and then fallen away! No, says the Saint, he was not a good boy: when you thought him so, he was, as our Lord says of the Pharisees, *like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness*: so did this boy *outwardly indeed appear to men just, but within he was full of hypocrisy and iniquity* (St. Matt. xxiii. 27, 28): so that any one with St. Peter's discernment might have said to him, what Peter said to Simon Magus: *Thy heart is not right before God* (Acts viii. 21). Corruption and impurity filled this boy's heart, his senses and imagination, his secret words and his private doings. Under a fair exterior, he was rotting as an apple rots from the core outwards. At last the corruption reached his outward and visible behaviour; and when the restraints of school-life were removed, he was numbered with the wicked and was as bad as any of them; and the faith, whose mysteries he had profaned, was taken away from him, and he was a Catholic and a Christian no more. This is one explanation: it accounts for hundreds of defections, but not for all. St. John

Chrysostom then offers an alternative answer: "How shall we know but that, while everything else was right in them, the chief point of all good, lowliness of heart, was entirely neglected?" Here then is another explanation: the boy seemed good and was good, but he was terribly self-conceited and vain; vain of his handsome appearance, pleasant address, and beautiful voice; vain of his advantages over his school-fellows in dress, in manners, in knowledge, in proficiency of mind and body, and,—grossest of all vanities,—vain of his money; from vanity he passed to pride, haughty self-confidence, refusal to ask counsel or take correction: thus pride went before, and destruction followed after. He falls among unbelievers: they flatter him: the one thing in the way of his development and entire enfranchisement, they tell him, is his faith: that he consents to fling down and overstep. When he is humbled under the chastening hand of the Almighty, he will retrace his steps, and go back to look for what he has flung away, and take it up and place it in his bosom, and be at last what no proud man and no vain-glorious boy is,—wise.

LXXI.—WHY DENY MYSELF?

I MUST deny myself, because many of the things that I desire cannot go together: to have one is to give up another. If I were studying for an examination, and the desire of passing it were so strong as to absorb my whole nature and energies, then to be sure I should need no effort of self-denial. Whatever promised to store my mind with the requisite knowledge, or to keep my body

in condition to second my mind in acquiring more knowledge, and producing it when wanted,—that I should take to; and abhor every distraction and every indulgence that went to lessen my chance of success. Then I might without reserve abandon myself to my liking; and my nature of itself would carry me,

To scorn delights and live laborious days.

Alas, my desires for any one end are never so regular and constant! To-day I am all eagerness for examination and study: but next week, when some excitement is on, my heart is drawn to that; and I decide, not very wisely it may be, that studies can afford to wait. Thus no great end in life is gained without an active and watchful resistance, now to one distracting impulse, now to another. The name for that repressive vigilance is 'self-denial.' Self-denial is continually practised in view of mere worldly success. A good oarsman is made by self-denial, a good marksman, a good musician, and a good scholar. It takes self-denial to write even a novel of any merit. Self-denial then is needful because of the variety of our desires; and that variety arises out of the composition of our nature. Some things we desire inasmuch as we are animals, as food and warmth and rest: some things as we are reasonable beings, as honour, knowledge, friendship: other things as we are Christians, as holiness, Sacraments, heaven. All these desires can be accommodated and harmonised, but not without a watchful effort: they will not fall into harmony of themselves. Some persons the desire of food and drink carries to such lengths that they become incapable of

the pursuit of knowledge: their study hours are turned into revels. In others the curiosity of knowledge is gratified to the neglect of prayer and the endangering of faith. Thus self-denial in me is called upon to do the function of the policeman, to keep order in the crowd of my jostling and conflicting desires. There is, I notice, one desire in me, not the strongest, by no means the most clamorous, a quiet, respectable sort of desire, but endowed with immense vitality, a desire which gradually subdues the rest and outlives them all: what is that? It is the desire of ease, the sheer, pure, undiluted love of doing nothing and vegetating quietly. *Otium, Grosphé*, and the rest, as Horace sings. There are those in whom this desire does not wait the hour of enfeebled old age to attain its majority: it is supreme lord paramount from boyhood onwards. Is that my case? The indulgence of that do-nothing desire will not make my fortune in this life: and, for the world to come, when they pray over my dead body, 'Eternal rest give to him, O Lord,' may not the angels reply: 'Why, this creature entered into his rest long ago, and has slept throughout life like a dormouse: what claim has he to rest for eternity, who has not laboured in time?' I need self-denial to overcome my laziness.

LXXII.—WORTH WHILE NOW.

It is always worth while doing the good that just at this moment lies within my power to do. St. Francis of Sales, when a student at the University of Paris, suffered long and cruelly from a horrible thought that he

was sure to be damned. At length he flung the temptation from him and conquered it quite, in this way. He said manfully: 'Well, if I am not to see and love God for eternity, at least I will love Him with all my heart this hour while I may.' It is worth while now for me, —now while the brief occasion lasts,—to overcome one temptation, to do one small kindness, to improve my mind by one half-hour of study, to wait in patience when there is nothing else to be done, to bear a headache, or sleeplessness, or some small pain. Life cannot be filled with great deeds, nor deeds of manifest profit and advantage to oneself and mankind. There must be margins and leavings in the web of human existence: there must be pieces over, the use of which is not apparent; and these leavings, as they seem void of good, are readily turned to evil use. We shall find, if we think, that many of our sins are committed in these loose and unoccupied times: whereas our hours of active and successful work, or keen sport and play, are usually innocent. The author of the *Imitation of Christ* has a chapter (iii. 51), "that we must apply ourselves to humble works when we are not up to our best." We must be content at certain times to do anything that is innocent and lawful; and console ourselves with the reflection, that all lawful works are works of grace in him who is in the state of grace. On the other hand I must be jealous of the hours in which my faculties are bright and available for work. Even in my worldly interest I must be jealous of them. Those are precious hours: only in them can I prepare myself, and in them I must prepare myself, to attain to

excellence in my profession. Let me never tamely take the excuse that the professions are overcrowded. The professions are not overcrowded with competent men. The crowding is of idlers and incapables. In every respect, for this world and for the next, it is worth while now to labour to rank high in the calling that God has marked out for me. Whether I am to be lawyer or soldier, medical man or priest, the best quality of my profession is good enough for me, and nothing short of the best that I can attain to. In my profession I need to be a healthy, well-built man; and I must take my exercise and fresh air accordingly. But I may well put to myself such a question as this: 'Are you training for an athlete or for a lawyer?' The training is not the same for both. 'Do you intend setting up as a cricket professional?' Such an intention would justify the devotion of more hours to cricket than should be spent by one who was going on the stock exchange. Man is so constituted that the maturity of his mind comes after the maturity of his body; and his intellectual faculties are then at their best when his muscular agility has begun to fail. A man's intellectual powers are properly at their best in later life: but unless hard labour in youth has been spent upon them, they never come to their best at all. An exhausted body and an empty head make a sad old age. Medical men tell us that middle-aged and elderly people are healthier and live longer for having acquired in early life the habit of sustained mental activity. They point to the long lives of bishops and judges. I may not be called to the bench in either capacity: but I have a soul and I have an

understanding ; and I may ask myself : ‘Am I not called to be—an athlete perhaps, but an athlete and something besides ?’

LXXIII.—HAPPINESS IN GOODNESS.

SHALL I be happy, if I am good ? I know I shall be happy in heaven, but that seems a long way off. Shall I be happy on earth ? I ask the question in some anxiety, because I hear a great deal about carrying the cross ; and I cannot conceive how any one can carry the cross and be happy. Carrying the cross means, I suppose, making oneself miserable. Now, though I should like to be good, I have no mind to make myself miserable. What am I to do ? I am to put out of my head for ever the notion that carrying the cross means making oneself miserable. There is one indeed who, if I try to be good, will do everything in his power to make me miserable. That is my enemy the devil, whom St. Peter bids me to *resist, strong in faith* (1 Pet. v. 9). St. Chrysostom says that as a Christian resists thoughts of impurity, so he should resist thoughts of sadness : indeed the one often leads to the other. And St. Ignatius : “It is proper to the evil spirit to sting, to sadden, to put obstacles in the way, making the soul restless by false reasonings to prevent its getting on. And it is proper to the Good Spirit to give courage and strength, consolation and rest of soul, making things easy and removing all obstacles, that the soul may go on further in doing good.” And St. John Chrysostom again : “It is proper to the devil to create trouble and excitement and to

shroud the mind in darkness : whereas it belongs to God to shed light, and with understanding to teach us what we need to know." In short, there are two crosses, our Lord's cross and the devil's cross. Our Lord's cross consists of the labours of my state, and the pain and sorrow that goes with labour, of whatever sort it be, as God said in the beginning to Adam : *in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread : thorns and briars shall the earth bear to thee* (Gen. iii. 18, 19). This cross I must submit to be nailed to, and never come down till death releases me, never abdicate, never resign. The devil's cross consists of feelings of wretchedness, black discontent, irritation, complainings, downheartedness and misery,—as it were whiffs from the cloud that envelopes Satan in eternal despair. This cross I must fling far from me. There is no virtue in long faces, even when pious people pull them. To carry Christ's cross manfully, one should be reluctant to avow that one has got any great weight of it on one's shoulder. Let me take an example. A frequent cross with youth now is the cross of examinations. I was going to add 'in uncongenial matter': but somehow nearly everything that one is examined in, and has to plod through during months of preparation, comes to be felt as uncongenial matter. Here are two wrong things to do, and one right thing. The first wrong thing is to refuse the examination, get oneself let off, or let oneself off by ceasing to study. That is like resigning a burdensome office in later life, usually a mistake. It is flinging Christ's cross away. The second wrong thing is to go on studying, making oneself miserable all the while with lamentations about the disagree-

ableness of the task and the prospects of failure. That is adding to Christ's cross Satan's cross, and may likely enough end in casting off both,—*quod erat faciendum*, in Satan's plan. The one right thing is to work hard, serenely and faithfully, day by day, doing all one can, and committing results to God. The moral is this: the cross of sadness should always be got rid of by a Christian, so far as ever he is able to shake it off: but the cross of arduous and at times disagreeable employment should be held on to and cheerfully borne.

LXXIV.—SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD.

'SERVANT of the servants of God' has been the Pope's official title ever since the days of Gregory the Great. From the days of Edward III. the Prince of Wales has borne for his motto two words signifying 'I serve.' "We are all one anothers' servants," the Prime Minister said the other day in a speech. The army and navy are 'the United Services.' "That wherein one man excels another man is given him of God that therewith he may serve other men," says St. Thomas Aquinas. A principle worthy of consideration, There was One whose glory the prophet saw in vision: *thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him* (Dan. vii. 10). But, coming upon earth, He tells us of Himself: *the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister* (St. Matt. xx. 28). Coming a man among men, He subjected Himself to that law of human kind which enacts, not that all

are to command all, or that all, are to obey all, but that all are to serve all, and he who commands most is most of all to serve his fellow-men. Here is a youth who believes that his birth, his money, his education, his fine clothes, were bestowed on him, not that he might render special service to his country and his people, but that he might strut about and command admiration. That youth's name is written down in an ignoble register, the Book of Snobs. Arthur Wellesley was not such, nor any of the great men whose names live in history. Another takes his talents and position for a warrant to bend others to his will, and wring tribute and service out of them. This youth becomes a tyrant, petty or great according to the measure of his success. The lives of great tyrants are preserved in history to the execration of mankind. To go back to St. Thomas. "It is to be considered," says the Holy Doctor, "that whatever excellence a man has, is given to him by God, to use for the service of his fellow-men: hence the testimony that other men render to his excellence ought so far forth to be matter of complacency to him as it shows the way open to him to make himself of service to others." So, if I can make a good speech, or sing well, or have money, it shows the way open to me to make myself of service to others. Really this is a new view, and one not generally taken, of ability and wealth and power! But it is taken by the Creator, who has bestowed those gifts, and by the Judge who will call the receiver to account for them. *A certain nobleman went to a far country to take to himself a kingdom and to return. And calling his ten servants, he gave them ten pounds, and said to them, Traffic*

till I come (St. Luke xix. 12, 13). What sort of traffic he intended, is evident from another place. To traffic with these pounds was to lay out one's powers and gifts for the service of one's neighbour. *As long as ye did it to one of these my least brethren, ye did it to me* (St. Matt. xxv. 40). There was one who wrapped up his pound in a napkin. It is not said that he put it to any bad use, but he did no good with it: he made it a means of his own enjoyment: his neighbours were none of them the better for his being rich, noble, talented and great. And he was met by his Lord with the reproach, *Thou good-for-nothing servant* (St. Luke xix. 21, 22); and his place was with the reprobate on the left hand (St. Matt. xxv. 30: 41—45) and with the rich glutton (St. Luke xvi. 19—23). Whatever advantage I enjoy over my companions, I should count it all the greater call on me to be of service to others. With the heir to the throne, *Ich dien*, 'I serve.'

LXXV.—FAITH AND REASON.

"No mortal is wise at all hours," says a Latin writer. Every one of us is liable to fits of unreasonableness: under them, our friends say, we are not ourselves, but seem as though we had been for the time changed into a very disagreeable somebody else. Were these unfortunate seasons perpetuated in us, our characters would be ruined, our natures spoilt, our friends driven away. We must admit that there is something hovering about us, and at times more or less taking possession of us, that very greatly needs to be checked.

We are not always to be trusted. We are apt to break out in freaks. The freaks of the man are not the freaks of the boy, nor his again those of the mere child: but this uncertain freakish disposition is absent from no age; and in some cases shows up worst when age should be most venerable. Now here we have an argument for Christianity. Some defenders of Christianity rummage in libraries, and bring out old documents. Without travelling so far for erudition, any one of us may find a valid reason for the faith that is in him by simply consulting the records of his own heart. When I am most reasonable, then I am most religious. I find God in my bright and sunny moods, when I am in perfect possession of my own soul. But when the tempest rages and reason is in abeyance; when, so far as feelings go, "chaos is come again"; then faith seems to vanish, and prayer to have become impossible, and I ask myself what religion is; and the only thing to sustain me is a still, small voice, rehearsing memories of the past, bidding me hope and still trust in God. But for that, I should despair, and lose hope and faith together. Do not these experiences show how reason and faith are allied, and work in connexion, and need the support the one of the other? Unbelief is an enemy to the reason that dwells within me; and the best and soberest judgment of my understanding refers me to faith, and bids me take God's word for much that here and now I cannot possibly understand. To hear the incoherent shrieks of men who have lost the faith, one need not lean over the margin of the eternal abyss: they may be heard

even on earth, whenever such men approach the subject of God, and of the Divinity of Christ, and the Sacraments, and the Papacy, and the public policy of the Catholic Church. St. Peter speaks of *the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruption of the meek and quiet spirit, that is precious before God* (1 Peter iii. 4). This hidden man, incorrupt, meek, quiet, dear to God, is the man who walks by reason and faith, two divine guides, telling him his way in unison. "It is truly meet and just, reasonable and wholesome," to take God's word, and to cry Holy, Holy, Holy, before His still unseen throne.

LXXVI.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

The hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life ; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment (St. John v. 28, 29). In these words our Saviour promises, what St. Paul says elsewhere, *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead both just and unjust* (Acts xxiv. 15). Holy Scripture, however, prefers to speak of the resurrection of the just. Of this alone is mention made in our Saviour's discourse at Capharnaum, where He repeats four times, *And I will raise him up at the last day* (St. John vi. 39, 40, 44, 55). St. Paul throughout a long chapter (1 Cor. xv.) speaks of the resurrection of the Saints to glory. He speaks of it as one of the first and most important truths of Christianity. In early

ages of the Church, people thought of the day of judgment and resurrection of the dead as an event likely to happen in their lifetime. It has been so long delayed that we have come to regard it with that faint interest which men attach to an occurrence that may be three thousand years off. *Where is the promise of his coming? for, since our fathers have slept, all things continue as from the beginning of creation* (2 Pet. iii. 4). This seems to be just what our Lord foretold: *The bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept: and at midnight a cry was raised, Lo, the bridegroom! For as in the days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and they knew not till the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of man be* (St. Matt. xxv. 5, 6: xxiv. 38, 39). Or to use another comparison, warranted by St. Luke xvii. 28—30, the last judgment shall break in upon an astonished world like the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius, which overwhelmed Pompeii, or in our own day (8th May, 1902) of Mont Pelée in Martinique, which destroyed the town of St. Pierre in a quarter of an hour. We never know how far off the resurrection of the body may be, or how near. When we are gathered to our quiet graves, it may be to lie there for centuries till nothing but dust is left of us, or it may be only a few weeks ere we rise again. One thing alone is certain,—we *shall* rise again; and, if ours is the resurrection of the just, that one instant of renewed life, “the wild freshness of” that eternal “morning,” will compensate for all the degradation of the tomb, the bitterness of death, the pains of sickness, the labours of our allotted vocation in this

world. *O death, where is thy victory?* (1 Cor. xv. 55). The victory of death is complete when a man dies: his decease is a total defeat, dissolution, and spoliation of his humanity, as a beaten army is broken up, and its guns and stores all captured: but when the man rises again, and stands on his feet, glorious and immortal, the image of his risen Saviour, whose is the victory then? This expectation sets the body of the Christian man in a new light. The heathen looked upon his body as a source of enjoyment, to be made the most of while it lasted. *Our life is the passing of a shadow, and none cometh back from death: come then, let us enjoy the good things that are: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die* (Wisd. ii. 5, 6: 1 Cor. xv. 32). These are heathen sentiments. Philosophers argue against them, and plead the claims of society. Perishable though the individual be, they say, society lasts; and the perishable individual should consider society. No doubt he should. But he finds another and a personal reason for self-restraint, when he considers that neither his soul nor his body either is to perish for ever. In this earthly body, from the Christian stand-point, the soul is as a Queen weaving her own Coronation robes. *For we must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the proper things of the body* (or, a more probable reading, *the things done through the body*), *whether it be good or evil* (2 Cor. v. 10). The Incarnation, whereby *the Word was made flesh* (St. John i, 14), was not for the salvation of our souls only, but for the salvation of the whole man, including, as St. Paul says expressly, *the redemption*

of our body (Rom. viii. 3). For this my Saviour bids me eat His *flesh and drink His blood* in Holy Communion, in preparation for the fulfilment of His promise to raise me up, body and soul, at the last day (St. John vi. 55); to remodel and *transform the body of my lowliness*, so that it shall be made in the form of the body of his glory (Philip. iii. 21); or in other words, to make this poor flesh of mine as His Body now is in the glory of His resurrection. But to this end I must strive with all fidelity to God's grace against that sin by which, St. Paul says, *a man sinneth against his own body*. I must fly impurity: I must know that I am the temple of the Holy Ghost. I must glorify and bear God in my body (1 Cor. vi. 18—20).

LXXVII.—LOST BEARINGS.

IN November, 1890, H.M.S. *Serpent* steamed full speed upon a rock on the north-west coast of Spain, and was lost. The causes assigned for the disaster were a strong current, the compass being out of order, and the light on Cape Villano not having been made out. Briefly, the officers had lost their bearings on a dangerous coast, and the loss of the ship followed as a matter of course. It is not altogether an uncommon thing for boys to lose their bearings in matters of conscience, to take things for sins that are not sins, and to see no harm in what is really wrong. Their conscience is out of order, as was the compass of that ship. An example. Some one was once given for a penance in confession to say the first four prayers in the Litany of

the Saints. He did not know what prayers were meant : he was afraid to ask : he went to confession next time without having said the penance of his last confession : he thought that was a sin, got into great trouble, and so he remained for a long time. The danger of persons thus *darkened in mind through the ignorance that is in them* is that sometimes *in despair they give themselves up to great sins* (Eph. iv. 18, 19). Or they form bad habits in ignorance, which are hard to break off when they come to know better. The remedy is to consult some prudent person, not a person of one's own age, but an elder, a father, or mother, or confessor. It is a confessor's business not merely to hear sins and absolve from them, but to hear difficulties and advise about them; and for these difficulties he is as much bound by the seal of confession as for sins. 'But how if many are going to confession? I do not like to take up time and be longer than the rest.' The way to obviate that is to say to your confessor that you should like to have a talk with him sitting down. He makes an appointment with you for some other hour. You come at the time named. Though you are both seated, and your confessor is not wearing his stole, the conversation is still part of the confession that has gone before, or is to follow after, and is covered by the seal. Or you may go to confession when others are not going. There is no difficulty in the arrangement: the business is the simplest thing in the world: nor is it an easy thing for a boy to puzzle a trained theologian, who has passed many examinations, and possibly was hearing confessions before you were born.

LXXVIII.—THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF
GOD. (Acts xx. 27.)

THERE might be a cup mixed with twelve ingredients, harmless to drink: but if you took five of them away, the remaining seven would poison you. There might be a building safe to stand for ages, but the removal of an arch here and of a tower there would bring the structure down. A complex building stands by its component parts thrusting against each other. To diminish it may be to destroy it. The counsel of God, so far as He has been pleased to reveal it to men's knowledge for their salvation, makes up the articles of Catholic faith. It is dangerous to hold less than the whole counsel of God. One article completes another. Thus the article, "the Holy Catholic Church," completes the second article, "Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." It would be strange if God our Lord had become man on earth, and in one generation had disappeared, leaving no saving presence, no living divine authority to represent Him. Or consider the doctrine of eternal punishment. This doctrine the Reformers of the sixteenth century retained. But they made hell terrible as God never meant it to be terrible, they made the preaching of it almost an insult to Divine Providence, by taking away all that blessed provision which God has made in the Catholic Church for men's escape from hell. Hell and no sacramental absolution! Hell and no Blessed Sacrament! Hell and no guiding Church, no Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron Saints! Hell and no Crucifix! We may expect of our God that, as in His justice He has created ever-

lasting fire for the devil and his angels, so in His wisdom and merciful care for the men of His redemption He has set up strong and plainly marked safeguards to prevent men of good will from falling into that abyss. Such safeguards are plentiful in the Catholic Church: or rather, her whole economy is a safeguard and protection screening men from everlasting woe. Frequent Communion and hearing of Mass, Church services, singing of the Divine Office, convents and monasteries, religious vocations and vows, relics of saints, pilgrimages, indulgences, lighting of candles before shrines, fasting and abstinence, fine churches, rich altars and altar furniture, holy images and pictures, commandments of the Church, extending even to such a domestic matter as marriage, schools of Catholic philosophy and theology, sermons on hell and judgment as well as on the Blessed Sacrament and the Holy Ghost,—these things I must value and speak up in defence of them, though all cannot make use of them all equally: these things go to make up that *whole counsel of God*, which is to save men from sin and hell. I must never be one of those Catholics, ‘liberal’ in giving away what is not theirs to dispose of, who are ready to surrender Church doctrines and Church practices, retaining only what they are pleased to consider essential and suited to the times. The words of our Divine Saviour in the gospels are suited to all times. Those words are applied to the times in which we live by the voice and authority of the Church of to-day. A Catholic, by the name he bears, is a thorough, whole-hearted man, universal in his charity, uncompromising in his faith.

LXXIX.—WILL YOU ALSO GO AWAY?

(St. John vi. 67.)

WHEN our Divine Lord, a twelvemonth before His Passion, had declined the honours of a temporal King, had told the multitudes to *labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to life everlasting*, had promised to give men His *flesh to eat* and His *blood to drink*, then many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him; and he said to the twelve, *Will you also go away?* They answered by another question: to whom should they go? who else had the promise of eternal life to make and to fulfil but their Master? (St. John vi. 15, 27, 52 sq., 67—69). A grand answer, and they were faithful to their word, all except one, who seems to have had no part in the answer, but to have been one of them *that believed not* (v. 65). They who fell away from our Lord on that occasion did so partly through misunderstanding His promise of giving His Flesh to eat, partly through understanding too well and by no means relishing His declaration that He had no temporal greatness to offer, but only spiritual good. Hastiness and worldliness were the causes of their disaffection. The Apostles understood the promise of the Holy Eucharist no more than did these unbelievers: but they believed what they did not understand; they trusted their Master to do nothing but what was reasonable, to promise nothing but what He could perform, and to give magnificently. The gift then promised was given in the supper-room twelve months later, and is still with Christ's disciples on earth. Far from driving

them away, it forms the sweetest and dearest of the ties that bind them to their Master. How many are kept away from Christ and His Church by misunderstandings which they have not the patience to go into and see removed !

Worldliness, however, is something deeper than a misunderstanding. It is a positive alienation of heart from our Blessed Lord. He promises consolation hereafter : but the worldling says : ' Give it me here and now ; and never mind the hereafter,' like Esau selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage (Gen. xxv. 32—34); and upon that temper of mind our Lord cries woe (St. Luke vi. 24). The world takes it as an insult that the follower of Christ goes through life, looking for something better than the world has to offer,—as it were, eating sparingly at the world's table because he is invited to the eternal *wedding-feast of the Lamb* (Apoc. xix. 9). This is the deepest reason of all for the implacable hatred which the world bears to the Church; and it is the very reason for which Christ was hated and crucified by the Jews (St. John xix. 15: Wisdom ii. 12—16). As a Christian, St. Peter tells me, I am a *stranger and pilgrim* upon earth (1 Peter ii. 12). As a Christian, St. Paul reminds me, my *conversation* (or *citizenship*) is in heaven (Philip. iii. 20). As a Christian, St. John bids me, *love not the world, nor the things that are in the world* (1 John ii. 15). As a Christian, I am *not of the world*, as Christ my Master says, *I also am not of the world* (St. John xvii. 16). I must use the things of the world, but never put in them my chief trust and main contentment. I must take care not to get 'naturalised' in a country to which

by my new birth in Baptism I have ceased to belong. *Demas hath left me*, writes St. Paul, *having loved the world that now is, and is gone to Thessalonica* (2 Tim. iv. 9). Judas went away from Christ on the same motive, and is *gone to his own place* (Acts i. 25). May *neither things present nor things to come, nor any creature, be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

LXXX.—O SOL SALUTIS.

“O SUN of salvation, Jesus, shine in the recesses of our minds.” This is the beginning of a hymn used by the Church on the Sundays in Lent. It would serve very well for Corpus Christi, which indeed is a solemnity not merely annual, but perennial: it goes on all the year round. The sun attracts the earth, warms the earth, and is a source of life to whatever lives on the earth. If the attraction of the sun were to cease, the earth would not move in an orbit, making spring, summer, autumn, and winter: but would fly off into space, like a stone from a sling: there would be no more seasons and years measured out: the difference between day and night would grow less and less sensible, as the earth rushed away on its path of darkness: light and heat would be gradually left behind: men, beasts, plants would die off; and our world would become a frozen ball, a mere moving mass of brute matter. If there were no God, we should worship the sun: for there is nothing in the material order to which men owe so much. Without the sun, we should have nothing to

eat, for neither plant nor animal could live: consequently we should have neither vegetable nor animal food,—and there is no other food. We should die of thirst, for every liquid would be frozen hard as stone: but what clinches the matter is that we ourselves should be frozen. Now, to the life of grace, Jesus Christ our Saviour is all that the sun is to the life of nature. Without Him, we should be *dead in our sins* (1 Cor. xv. 17: Eph. ii. 5). Nowhere is He so attractive, because nowhere so near and intimate, as in His presence with us in the Blessed Sacrament. We have there every mystery of His life and death, brought to our doors, and happening, as it were, in our own time. The Babe of Bethlehem, the Youth of Nazareth, the Crucified of Calvary, the Conqueror risen from death, all this is Jesus on our Altars; and thus the Mystery of the Altar brings every other mystery near; and makes Christmas Day, Passiontide, and Easter, living realities, not bare and empty commemorations of a distant past. In the very words by which the consecration is effected, the Holy Eucharist is called the “mystery of faith.” It is at once the trial of our faith the sum of our faith, and the strengthening of our faith. The exercise that tries any living power, strengthens it also. Exercising our faith upon the Real Presence of our Saviour in the Holy Eucharist, we believe therein all His mysteries, His Godhead and His Humanity, His Redemption, Death, and continued Life. We believe them all in the Blessed Sacrament; and we believe them more firmly because of the Blessed Sacrament that binds them together in our minds. That makes us love and cherish

them; and love is mighty to confirm belief. Thus, as the sun is the centre of our material world, so is the Blessed Sacrament the centre of our religious world. There is summer in our souls, when our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is ardent and lively. Then we are ready to make sacrifices for religion's sake: then we grow in grace fast. But a coldness and a mist arises, and the sun is hidden: the Blessed Sacrament is ill appreciated, little thought of, never visited except under obligation, seldom received; and our good works droop and fall off like leaves in late October. We must get our spiritual summer back again, if we are to bring forth much good. I will return and enter in again to the Altar of God. I will pray my Eucharistic Saviour to show the light of His countenance and His beaming love to me once more:

O Sol salutis, intimis,
Jesu, refulge mentibus

LXXXI.—A HOLIDAY WITHOUT GOD.

A HOLIDAY without God is, if we think of it, a contradiction in terms. How can a *day* be kept *holy*, from which God is excluded? But, though improperly so named, a holiday without God is possible enough, and is often taken, even by people who make some profession of serving God. How can such people be said to keep *the greatest and first commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart* (St. Matt. xxii. 37, 38)? Is our Creator then a burdensome companion and no friend, an obstacle to our happiness and a kill-joy to our

feast, when we wish to have a merry time and enjoy ourselves? Must we part with God, to be happy? Is the shaking off of His sweet yoke our idea of a holiday? Does the neglect of Mass, of Sacraments, of prayer, give a zest to our enjoyment? To sue out a dispensation from the commandments, is that the prelude to our revels? Oh but we part with God only for a time: we will have Him back in a week, or ten days, or, may be, in a month. Are we sure of that? God is wonderfully long-suffering, and ever eager to accept our repentance. Still is it not rather too much to expect Him to await our good pleasure and come back at our beck? *God is not mocked* (Gal. vi. 7), as the wicked learn in hell. But suppose that He takes us back to His mercy, and that we do not suffer irreparable loss: that can only be on condition of our repentance. Now repentance means that we are sorry and ashamed of ourselves, recognising how mean our conduct has been, how dastardly, how atrocious. If the thing is mean, dastardly, and atrocious, and has not yet been done, in Heaven's name let me not go and do it. Who would break a leg because it could be set in hospital? Who would strike a mother because she was forgiving and kind? God loves me, and wishes to accompany me in my holiday time as in my work. He is willing enough to allow me a holiday, only that I do not take it without Him. I will not seek my amusement in sinful sights and shows, nor in the company of those whom I shrewdly suspect to be wicked and deceitful. I will not neglect my daily prayers; and if I foresee that I shall be up late and very tired at night, I will try to say my night prayers early before the fatigue comes on.

I will remember Friday abstinence ; and not grudge a mile or two, or a little enquiry, to find and hear Sunday Mass. It shall not be my effort in holiday time to do the least I can for Almighty God. I do not usually do the least I can for my body and the satisfaction of my appetite. With a glass of champagne before me, I do not enquire, ‘Are you sure my health requires this?’ before I drink it. Oh that I may succeed in holiday time in doing what my soul’s health requires—making such use of prayer and Sacraments, and practising such timely avoidance of evil occasions, as may keep me out of mortal sin.

LXXXII.—APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER.

FOR any Catholic to be a member of the Apostleship of Prayer two conditions are requisite and sufficient : first, to get one’s name registered at some Church or place where the Apostleship has been established, and to receive a ticket of admission : secondly, to make what is called the Morning Offering, that is to say, every morning in a certain definite form of oblation to offer to God all one’s actions and sufferings in union with the intentions wherewith Jesus Christ offers Himself as our Victim in all the Masses said throughout the world. Nothing further is necessary to membership : but the members are further recommended to offer up every month one Communion in reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for all insults and irreverences offered Him in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. This devotion of the Morning Offering rests on the main and essential

principles of Christianity :—that in *Christ we have access to the Father* (Eph. ii. 18) : that *there is no salvation in any other, no other name under heaven given to man, whereby we are to be saved* (Acts iv. 12) : that this salvation was wrought out by the death of Christ on the Cross, who *made peace through the blood of his cross, blotted out the handwriting that was against us, and took it away, nailing it to the cross* (Col. i. 20 : ii. 14) : that this redeeming sacrifice and death of our Saviour is continually *shown forth* and re-enacted in His own very Body and Blood, made present at the consecration in Holy Mass (1 Cor. xi. 24 : St. Luke xxii. 19). Whenever a priest says Mass, he says it for some special intention, which he commends to God at the pause in the *Memento* for the living and for the dead. But Jesus Christ, as He is the Victim, so also is the Chief Priest in every Mass that is offered. He offers the Mass by the hands of his visible, mortal ministers. He then has His own intentions for every Mass that He offers, intentions sublime, wise, gracious, universal, for His Church and for mankind. But cannot He carry out His intentions without my co-operation ? *Who resisteth his will* (Rom. ix. 19) ? None, whenever He wills absolutely. Thus He wills absolutely to come and judge the world some day. No need of our praying for a day of judgment : *for he that is coming, will come, and will not delay* (Heb. x. 37) beyond His destined hour. But many things our Lord intends and wills only conditionally, if men co-operate with Him. Thus He does not intend to convert the Chinese, unless missionaries go to China. Prayers are a sort of missionaries. Many souls will be

converted if they are well prayed for, and not otherwise. But the most efficacious prayer is that which goes up in closest union with Christ Crucified, pleading in sacrifice for us. Christ Crucified thus pleads in every Mass. In every Mass, as the Church says, "the memory of His Passion is celebrated anew." I cannot spend my day in hearing Mass, travelling from Altar to Altar. It is not God's purpose that I should do that. But the Morning Offering of the Apostleship of Prayer, as sanctioned by the Holy See, puts me in relation with every Mass that is said that day, and lays upon every Christian Altar my work and my play, my words and thoughts, my pains and sorrows, my delights and joys, and every conscious action of my will,—always excepting that which is sinful, and so unacceptable, incapable of entering into holy union with the oblation of the Body and Blood of my Saviour. When I lie down to rest at night, I may ask myself: 'Of all that I have done to-day, of all my goings and comings, what shall endure to my eternal good? What have I laid up in the form of treasure for heaven?' And, provided I have spent the day in the state of grace, I may answer: 'All and every one of my deliberate acts of will that were right in themselves, and, very signally and specially, all that has received the consecration of my Morning Offering.' Of my strivings after the good things of this life, some will succeed, others will fail: but alike in success and failure, practising the Apostleship of Prayer, I may take to myself the Apostle's consoling words: *Be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not vain in the Lord* (1 Cor. xv. 58).

LXXXIII.—GRATITUDE.

THERE is said to be a tribe of savages who have no word in their language for 'Thank you': all they say, when you give them anything, is, 'This will be useful to me.' That is all that some civilised men think, whatever they say. Gratitude is one of the best signs of a good heart. One much versed in boys' ways once said: "I have never known any good come of an ungrateful boy." Boys as a class are not ungrateful: but they are like men in this respect: they are grateful only for kindness done to them individually and personally, not for benefits conferred on the whole school as a body,—just as they resent a private scolding, but rather like being scolded all together. It is not fair, as is sometimes done, to call boys 'an ungrateful lot' on that account. There is a certain humility in gratitude, acknowledging that one has not all good in oneself, but is in need, and open to being provided for, taught, and otherwise helped. The proud are ungrateful; and ingratitude in a boy argues that worst of vices, pride. So much for gratitude to human benefactors. Many persons, otherwise grateful, are not grateful to God, because they do not realise that God has care of them and wishes to be their friend, and that all the good things which they enjoy are so many personal favours which God has done them. For God does not scatter His favours vaguely and in the general, like a monarch flinging largesse among the multitude: He knows each recipient of His bounty, and has special care of each. We are beginning to find out God, when we begin to

feel in our hearts sentiments of gratitude towards Him. Till then, God might say to us what he said through His prophet to King Cyrus: *I have called thee by thy name, I have girded thy armour on thee, and thou hast not known me* (Isaias xlv. 5, 6). Gratitude has been satirically defined, "a lively expectation of future favours." This is satire, not truth. He who has felt gratitude in his heart would rather give this definition: 'Gratitude is a lively fear lest one make oneself unworthy of future favours.' A sense of unworthiness, of being treated too well, of experiencing excessive kindness, goes with deepfelt gratitude. It was the sentiment of David: *Who am I, Lord, and what is my house, that thou hast loved me thus far? I am all too little for thy benefits.* (2 Kings vii. 18, 19). When after years of life, perhaps, one's eyes are opened, this feeling becomes very strong: 'What a beast I have been! I have taken God's favours all this long time, and I have hardly ever thought of thanking Him.' Thus gratitude, and contrition for sin, and humility, go all three together: and where these sentiments meet in the heart, God is very nigh and well pleased. How much of my prayers consists of thanksgiving? Do I ever reckon up the number of little things that in one week have gone well with me, when they might easily have gone otherwise? Do I see the finger of God there? Or do I take all those convenient events with no more thankfulness than the savage?—'this will be useful to me.' Gratitude to God is one of the best signs of spiritual health. A soul full of gratitude is full of goodness. But when one gets so far as to thank God even for disappointments, failures,

sufferings, then one is indeed on the track of the Saints. We may suppose this difference among many between the souls in purgatory and the lost, that while the lost blaspheme, the Holy Souls thank God incessantly for their sufferings. St. John Chrysostom (hom. 10 ad Coloss.) quotes this prayer as used by a holy man of his time:—"We thank Thee for all the blessings bestowed on our unworthy selves from the first day even to this present: blessings that we know of and blessings that we do not know of, blessings manifest and blessings in disguise, blessings in deed and blessings in word, blessings according to our will and blessings against our will: for our times of affliction and our times of ease, for hell, for chastisement, for the kingdom of heaven." And St. John Chrysostom's own favourite ejaculation was, "Blessed be God for all things." With those words on his lips he died in exile.

LXXXIV.—A HAPPY DEATH.

Boys do not believe that they are ever going to die; still die they all will: see the tombstones of those dead men, read the dates of their birth, they were all boys once. A man's life may be compared to the course of a rifle-bullet flying: the all-important thing for that bullet is that it shall hit the mark: the mark of human life is a happy death, which means a happy eternity. At Baptism the bullet of life was aimed well and true to the mark. But, after a certain time of flight, a power is developed, which in a leaden bullet never appears: that power is free will, and by use of free will human life can

either keep on the right course, on which once it has started, or deviate from the course, and after deviation it may, with God's help, re-set itself again for the mark, or depart from God and deviate still further. Anyhow the bullet is always flying, and is sure to strike somewhere: the instant of its striking is the instant of death. The bullet cannot be fired a second time: it hits or misses once and for ever. Is it hard to think of a bullet with a time of flight as long as an old man's lifetime, say eighty years? Well, if it were possible to fire a rifle at the earth from one of the fixed stars, and to get the bullet to travel all the intervening distance, the time of flight would be longer than we can calculate, considerably over eighty years. As few men live to be ninety-five, there are few boys of fifteen for whom the remaining time of flight of their lives is eighty years: for most, it is not sixty: for some, it is less than ten: they will never see their twenty-fifth birthday. But whatever the ultimate number of their years, all will see their last birthday and the last day of their lives. That day will be either of all the days they have lived the best and happiest, or of all the days that they have lived the miserable and fatal termination. A happy death is not the same as a painless death. The happiest death ever died was that whereby, under the torment of the cross, our Saviour overcame sin and death and hell. St. Lawrence died a happy death on the gridiron, and Blessed Thomas More by the headsman's axe. To die as softly as one drops off asleep, and awaking to find an angry Judge and an everlasting fire, is not a happy death. A happy death is

death in the state of grace: that, and that alone, means eternal salvation. But though that is a happy death, there is yet a happier, and still a happiest. It is a happier death when one dies in the state of grace, owing little debt to God's justice in the shape of temporal punishment, whether for mortal sins forgiven in the past or for venial sins: for such a death means short purgatory and speedy paradise. Happiest death of all he dies, who dies in the state of grace, having done with substantial fidelity all the work and precisely the work of his life, the special work that God created him to do. This death is most like the death of Christ, who said on his dying day: *Father I have done to the end the work that thou gavest me to do: it is accomplished* (St. John xvii. 4: xix. 30). One word more about that flying rifle-bullet. I flatter myself that mine has yet far to fly. Possibly, but it is flying fast. In what direction is it flying? In the way of self-indulgence, idleness, and wilful sin? Or in the way of solicitude to keep the grace of God within me, the way of *my Father's business* (St. Luke ii. 49), the *narrow way* (St. Matt. vii. 14) and well-directed path of *the work that my Father has given me to do?*—so that, when the mark is hit and the work is done, I may say *Now, glorify thou me Father* (St. John xvii. 5).

Epilogue.

MARIA MATER GRATIAE.

“MARY, Mother of grace”: so the hymn in the Little Office. What a mother is to our natural life, Mary is made to us for the life of grace. Her Divine Son prepared her for Himself. She was conceived Immaculate, because she was to bear the Holy One of God. The single word ‘Mother’ contains all her prerogatives, for it is the reason of them all. Mother of God, and therefore Immaculate: Mother of Christ, and therefore Queen. Her Divine Son proved her, and tried her, and knew her worth: proved her for three and thirty years: tried her, setting her beside His Cross; and, dying, He resolved to bequeath to His Church His treasure, the best thing that He had found on earth. Therefore He said to St. John, standing for all the *disciples whom he loved*, *Behold thy mother* (St. John xix. 26, 27). So we find her in the early Church, the centre of a group of holy women (Acts i. 14), a Mother to the Apostles and to all who believed. As the Resurrection proved the Divinity of her Son, so was she the witness to His Humanity, such a witness as a Mother alone could be. We can still read a Mother’s memories in the first two

chapters of St. Luke's gospel. We find the Mother and the Child figured in the Catacombs, venerated in Syria, at Ephesus, at Constantinople. Along with her Son's Divinity is proclaimed the Maternity of Mary. The Mother is preached to the Teuton races, and is found to express and fulfil their ancestral idea of noble womanhood. She is the Lady of Christian chivalry. In every Cathedral and Abbey Church the Mother has her own Lady Chapel, usually in the richest part of the church at the back of the High Altar. When heresy arises, it hates and vilifies the Mother, and casts down her images: all the dearer on that account is she to faithful Catholics: the salutation Hail Mary becomes a symbol of Catholic faith. And what has the Blessed Mother of God, Holy Mary, been to me? As my mother's face was the first object that I knew, so the picture or image of Mary with her Child was my first religious attraction. I knew my God, a Child as I was, having a Mother as I had. When I had done wrong, or was in any fright or danger, I knew that this Mother was at hand to help and intercede. She could not be stern, or unforgiving: she would take my part, as a mother always takes her child's. Whatever real religion has entered my heart, Mary under God has put it there. There may be real religion without tenderness, but not to last. Religion may come without tenderness, it may begin in fear: but without tenderness it will not stay. The spring of religious tenderness in my heart has been worship of my heavenly Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She has shown to the eyes of my faith, even in

this exile, her Blessed Son. She has made Him to my mind and my heart a reality, a living Saviour, not a remote historical personage who once rendered the world a great service. What a good mother is to her child, Mary has been to me in everything that touches the salvation of my soul. My mother's look and mien and presence, my mother's words bidding me to goodness, my mother's intercession screening me from the consequences of my faults, my mother's deep but undemonstrative love, all that I have found in Mary, Mother of my God and mine! She is my heavenly Mother: death cannot take her away from me: she is undying, and when I must die, I trust to see her stand by me more visibly helpful then than ever before. Holy Mary, Mother of God and mine, pray for me a sinner now and at the hour of my death, Amen.

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